

Weekend



Death's decline
'Once, dying was all too easy. Now it is beginning to look too difficult'

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A glass act
Two of the world's top wine experts go head to head: Jancis Robinson meets Robert Parker

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Weekend



Colour of status
In its quiet neutrality, beige boasts of generations of exquisite taste

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Arts guide



Where to go and what to do when you get there

8-page summer Arts guide

Troops clash with students as Habibie names cabinet

By Sander Thomas and John Riddington in Jakarta

Indonesian security forces armed with tear-gas, clubs and machine guns moved into the grounds of the national parliament just before midnight last night to clear student protesters who have occupied the buildings for much of the past week.

As more than 1,000 marines and city soldiers gathered, the order went out through army loudspeakers: "Disperse, disperse. This building will be used for improving reforms." Many students stood their ground against the security forces and groups of sympathisers formed outside the parliament gate, jeering at the security forces, although that it appeared that some students were leaving peacefully.

The action is likely to hurt the reputation of President B.J. Habibie, the former vice-president who took over on Thursday after Mr Suharto relinquished his 32-year hold on power.

However one diplomat said: "If the soldiers persuade the students to leave peacefully it won't do too much damage to Habibie."

As the security forces made their move it emerged that General Prabowo Subianto, the commander of Indonesia's strategic reserves, and two aides, had been relieved of their duties. That appeared to signal an increase in influence by General Wiranto, the head of the armed forces.

The US and other governments had called on Indonesia to allow peaceful protests. After taking office this week, Mr Habibie himself described the students' protests as a "breath of fresh air".

Earlier, Mr Habibie had won the opposition's grudging acceptance of his new cabinet but failed to satisfy student protesters who still want early presidential elections.

Yesterday Mr Habibie picked two respected economists and representatives of some opposition groups for his cabinet, and replaced unpopular ministers close to Mr Suharto, including his daughter and her close friend, retired General Hartono.

The two economists, Bambang Subianto and Rahardjo Ramelan, are well thought of by the International Monetary Fund, which is backing a \$43bn rescue package for Indonesia. They were appointed minister of finance and minister of industry and trade respectively.

Mr Habibie also kept some well-regarded members of the last Suharto cabinet, including foreign minister Ali Alatas, defence minister Wiranto and Ghanjar Kartasasmita, the co-ordinating minister in charge of finance, economics and industry. Mr Bambang and Mr Ramelan will answer to Mr Ghanjar.

Mr Habibie also included members of both legal opposition parties and some political groups outside parliament. Amien Rais, who has emerged as the main opposition leader, said: "My impression is that the cabinet is not fully professional, and that it still has some elements of cronyism or nepotism... I neither support nor reject this cabinet."

*'Dream selection', Page 3
An unfinished revolution, Page 6*

QUEUES FORM EVEN BEFORE POLLING STATIONS OPEN AS ULSTER SEEKS TO END YEARS OF CONFLICT



Young Catholic girls outside a Belfast polling station yesterday. Reuters

Irish turn out in droves for historic peace vote

By John Murray Brown and Jimmy Burns in Belfast

The people of Ireland north and south went to the polls in huge numbers yesterday in a momentous vote on a peace agreement that could end more than a century of conflict.

The first all-Ireland poll since 1918 looked like producing a record turnout, with queues forming even before polling booths officially opened.

Ulster's 1.2m voters were being asked to approve a deal that creates a power sharing assembly and accountable cross-border institutions linking the province with the Irish Republic.

The Republic's 2.7m voters were being asked to support changes to Eamon de Valera's 1937 constitution, ending Dublin's territorial claim over Northern Ireland.

The poll was the focus of a bitter four-week campaign in Northern Ireland that has divided the majority unionist community, left nationalists largely on the sidelines, and seen Tony Blair, the British prime minister, take an increasingly high-profile role in urging voters to back the accord.

It broke new ground in Northern Ireland sectarian based politics, with the Ulster Unionists supporting the deal alongside their sworn enemy, Sinn Féin, the political wing of the IRA.

The poll saw many Protestants and Roman Catholics voting on the same side for the first time. The accord opens a new chapter in relations between the UK and the Irish Republic, raising hopes that this will herald the end of bitter sectarianism.

Pat Bradley, Northern Ireland's chief electoral officer, said that by lunchtime, even in unionist seats where turnout traditionally is low, half the ballot papers had already been cast.

People in wheelchairs, war veterans wearing their medals and young mothers with children were among the early voters.

One pensioner said: "We came out in the car specially. Normally we wouldn't bother to vote."

encouraged large numbers. Such was the determination to vote of one Belfast woman that she discharged herself from hospital in order to give her verdict.

Security was stepped up amid concerns that extremists opposed to the deal - both republican and loyalist - might seek to disrupt the vote.

In the Irish Republic, there was brisk turnout in border areas most affected by Ulster's troubles. Elsewhere voting was more sedate.

The signs last night were that there was likely to be at least 65 per cent support for the agreement in Northern Ireland.

Party officials said this should give David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, sufficient authority to counter claims by the No camp that the unionist community had not given its consent to the new political arrangements.

A Yes vote will pave the way for elections to a new 106-seat assembly on June 25.

Polling reports, Page 5

Setback for Pfizer after six die while on Viagra

By Tracy Corrigan in New York and Clive Cookson in London

The inexorable rise of Viagra, the world's first pill for countering impotence, faced its first setback yesterday, when it emerged that six people had died while taking the drug.

The US Food and Drug Administration said it was not clear whether the deaths were caused by the drug, which analysts have predicted will become the biggest selling medicine in history.

About one million prescriptions have been written for Viagra since its US launch on April 15. Prescriptions are running at

about 250,000 a week and still rising, according to Pfizer, its manufacturer.

But usage of the drug has not been confined to impotence sufferers. Other men - and some women - have also sought out the drug, which works by stimulating bloodflow, to improve sexual performance.

Viagra has become America's latest fashionable drug, widely compared with Prozac, the anti-depressant, and Redux, the anti-obesity drug. Both drugs attracted a broader audience than intended.

Analysts expect the drug to generate annual sales of around

\$2bn-\$4bn within two or three years, which could make it the biggest-selling drug ever.

Although Viagra is officially available only in the US, some supplies have reached other countries through unofficial sources such as internet dealers. It is likely to be launched in Brazil and Mexico in June and in Europe in September.

Pfizer said it had reported the deaths to the FDA as part of routine practice but added that the deaths suggested "nothing unusual, nothing different from clinical trials. No change of label is contemplated."

The drug's label includes a

warning that it should not be taken in conjunction with nitrates, a common heart medicine. Pfizer this week sent a letter to emergency room doctors reiterating the warning.

The FDA said it would look into "adverse reports" but added that the agency "continues to believe that the drug is safe and effective for its labelled indication and intended patient population."

Pfizer issued a statement on Thursday cautioning against "inappropriate use" of the drug. "We are seeing women taking Viagra and there is no safety data," said the company.

Pfizer's stock price, which had surged on promising early sales of the drug, slid \$4 to \$106 yesterday after the news of the deaths emerged.

"Wall Street gets spooked pretty easily," said Alex Zissou, pharmaceuticals analyst at Hambrecht & Quist.

The last major drug to expand beyond a patient population with a physical problem into more borderline use was Redux.

Redux, an anti-obesity drug widely used by slimmers, was withdrawn from the market last year after it was found to cause potential heart valve problems.

News General

Microsoft loses the first round

Microsoft lost the first round in its landmark legal battle with the US government and 20 states as a district judge rejected calls to delay the antitrust trial until next year. Antitrust officials accuse Microsoft of acting as an illegal monopoly by seeking to crush its competitor in internet software, Netscape Communications. The US justice department is seeking an injunction affecting Windows 95, the latest version of the best-selling operating software. Page 2

Israel prepares to welcome Newt Gingrich

Israel today receives Newt Gingrich, Republican speaker of the US House of Representatives, with both sides seeking maximum political mileage. For the Republicans, the visit is important for wooing the Jewish vote, traditionally loyal to the Democrats. For Mr Netanyahu, the gain is in the visit's symbolism: a leading Republican's support could, he thinks, insulate him from pressure by the Clinton administration. Page 2

Clinton announces plan to protect computers

US president Bill Clinton unveiled plans for an anti-terrorist initiative to focus on protecting computer and electronic networks from attack and to prepare the public against biological warfare. Mr Clinton said the government would assess the risk of attacks with the aim of developing early warning systems while increasing co-operation with allies. Page 2

Forestry companies give in to Greenpeace

Canadian forestry companies, anxious to end a damaging campaign by Greenpeace against timber exports from British Columbia, agreed to pursue certification under the Forest Stewardship Council scheme, which identifies timber produced in a sustainable manner. Page 2

Sotheby's and Christie's

Today what happens in the auction room is just half the story. To raise turnover, the two companies which dominate the fine art auction market must exploit their brand names, market their expertise, and use their knowledge of clients in other areas.



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News Business

BankBoston in \$800m bid

US commercial bank BankBoston is understood to have offered \$800m for Robertson Stephens, the investment banking boutique bought last year by BankAmerica. The price, 50 per cent more than BankAmerica paid, reflects the growing willingness of commercial banks to pay top dollar for investment banking franchises. Page 24

Axel Springer may bid for Mirror Group

Axel Springer Verlag, Germany's biggest newspaper publisher, is considering an offer for Mirror Group, the UK tabloid newspaper owner. Axel said it was looking at a number of "opportunities", including an offer for Mirror Group. Mirror denied it had had talks with Axel. Page 24 and Lex

Japan's carmakers suffer big fall in sales

Japan's top five vehicle builders last month scaled back production by more than 10 per cent in an attempt to cope with tumbling sales. Sales of new vehicles in April fell about 7.4 per cent. The fall was all the more disappointing since the comparison with April 1997 should have been easy, given the sharp drop in sales that month when the government increased sales taxes by 2 percentage points. Page 3

European markets edge ahead after holiday

European markets edged further ahead yesterday on their return from the Ascension Day break. The FTSE Eurotop 100 index gained 10.07 points to 2,821.73. The Dax index in Frankfurt moved up 15.66 to 5,530.19, a new high, and bourses in Paris and Vienna also recorded closing peaks. The Russian market, which slipped 11.8 per cent on Monday, fell another 2 per cent yesterday. Currencies, Page 8; London stocks, Page 17; World stocks, Page 21; Markets, FT Weekend Page XXII

Philips prepares to move into wines and spirits

By agreeing to take up to \$2bn worth of Seagram shares as part payment for the sale of its PolyGram entertainment subsidiary, Dutch electronics group Philips finds itself with an exposure to a wines and spirits portfolio that includes Chivas Regal and Mumm champagne. Page 23

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WORLD NEWS

MIDEAST TURMOIL CONTROVERSY OVER REPUBLICAN SPEAKER'S TRIP TO JERUSALEM

Israel welcomes Gingrich

By Judy Dempsey in Jerusalem

Israel today rolls out the red carpet for Newt Gingrich, Republican speaker of the US House of Representatives, with both sides seeking maximum political mileage.

The visit coincides with growing frustration by the Clinton administration over its failure to break the 15-month deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Madeline Albright, US secretary of state, proposed Israel hand over 13.1 per cent of the West Bank to the Palestinians.

Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli prime minister, rejected this, citing security concerns. He believes only Israel has the

right to decide how much land it will cede to the Palestinians.

In these two respects Mr Netanyahu and Mr Gingrich see eye to eye. "Israel and the Republicans will use the visit for their own ends but they are quite similar," said a foreign ministry official. "They both blame the Palestinians for the stalled peace process. They both criticise the Clinton administration for trying to pressure Israel into handing over land to the Palestinians."

For the Republicans the visit is important for wooing the Jewish vote, traditionally loyal to the Democratic party.

For Mr Netanyahu the gain is in the symbolism of

the visit: support by a leading Republican could, he believes, insulate him from pressure by the Clinton administration.

Mr Gingrich's four-day visit includes an address to the Knesset, or Israeli parliament, and meetings with the military and several ministers. But the most controversial aspect of the itinerary is a visit on Monday to the proposed site of the new US embassy in Jerusalem.

Mr Gingrich, who will be accompanied by Dick Gephardt, the Democrat minority House leader, has already said that "the time has come to break the ground, build the building". Congress passed legislation in 1995 for the US embassy

to move by 1999 to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv. Last year it passed a non-binding resolution endorsing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. It also called on President Clinton to move the embassy to Jerusalem.

Administration officials believe Mr Gingrich's visit to the site is unwise given the stalemate in the peace process and the sensitivity of Jerusalem. The city's future status is supposed to be left until final settlement negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Palestinians fear the visit could spark riots. Saeb Erekat, chief Palestinian peace negotiator, said Mr Gingrich was "playing with fire". But Mr Gingrich has



Israel border police in Jerusalem's Old City yesterday Reuters

publicly blamed the Palestinians for halting peace talks.

In an article published yesterday in the rightwing Jerusalem Post newspaper, he said the biggest stumbling block in the peace process was the failure by Palestin-

ians to remove from their charter the call for Israel's destruction. The Palestinians amended their charter in 1996 but have not yet undertaken all the legal steps to validate the changes.

Microsoft trial to start in September

By Richard Wolfe in Washington

Microsoft lost the first round in its landmark legal battle with the US government and 20 states as a district judge yesterday rejected calls to delay the antitrust trial until next year.

In the face of vigorous opposition from Microsoft, Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson said he wanted the trial to begin on September 8, when he intends to merge the various legal actions against the world's biggest software company.

Antitrust officials accuse Microsoft of acting as an illegal monopoly by seeking to crush its competitor to Internet software, Netscape Communications.

In the biggest antitrust case for two decades, the US justice department is seeking an injunction affecting Windows 95, the latest version of the best-selling oper-

ating software. The new version closely integrates Windows with Microsoft's controversial Internet browser.

The court order, if granted, would force Microsoft to install Netscape's rival browser alongside its own. It would also allow computer makers to change the "desktop" display which consumers see when they first switch on a computer.

Microsoft attempted to argue that there was no point in the government's urgent demands for an injunction because it had already shipped copies of Windows 95 to computer makers, including 2m back-up disks.

The government and states said Microsoft was expected to ship a further 2m copies of Windows 95 every month, which would allow it to dominate the market in Internet browsers before the case was heard in court.

Microsoft asked the court for seven months' delay to collect evidence and conduct interviews.

In reply, however, Judge Jackson said: "By the time you propose that you would be ready to have a hearing on the preliminary injunction, there would be some 16m horses out of the barn."

In response, Microsoft countered by quoting Jim Barksdale, chief executive of Netscape, telling a press conference in London last month that the launch of Windows 95 would not affect its market share.

It said the government's demands would break up Windows 95. "Operating systems come with browsers just like cars come with engines," said John Warden, Microsoft's attorney.

He condemned as a breach of copyright the idea that computer makers could change the appearance of Windows 95.

Canadian loggers see environmental light

By Lynn Swanson, Environment Correspondent

Canadian officials and forestry executives are suing for peace with environmentalists to end a damaging campaign by Greenpeace against timber exports from British Columbia.

On a peace mission to Europe, the two biggest companies operating in Canada's western-most province yesterday told customers in Britain, their biggest European market, that they would pursue certification under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) scheme.

The council identifies timber produced in an environmentally sustainable manner. But until the Greenpeace campaign began to bite, the scheme was opposed by British Columbia producers as too costly and giving too much power to environmentalists.

George White, an environmental manager at J Seabury, one of 87 UK companies to demand such certification from producers, said Western Forest Products promised to join the scheme by the middle of next year while Interfor, another big operator, agreed but set no deadline. "For three years we've been told that the FSC was not suitable for British Columbia," he said, revealing that its Homebase chain had begun trials of alternatives to Canadian wood products.

Derek Thompson, a forestry ministry official, told the Financial Times he was "increasingly optimistic" that talks he had been leading between companies and environmentalists in British Columbia would "within the next few days... have a good resolution".

Greenpeace says that current rates of logging of old rainforests in the province's central coast threaten a rare habitat for grizzly bears and other animal and plant species.

Larry Pedersen, chief forester of British Columbia, says that 100 years ago 62 per cent of the original forests remained. In 100 years half of the original forest would still be in place.

But Greenpeace and other environmentalist groups have demanded a moratorium on the clear-cutting of old forests in pristine valleys as the price for joining an official planning process for land use in the region.

The industry, hurt by the loss of its Pacific Rim export markets after the Asian economic crisis, wants an end to the Greenpeace campaign. Belgian producers also reiterated demands for certification this week, even after hearing the British Columbia delegation's arguments that the industry was already sustainable in practice.

Sandinistas start watershed congress

By James Wilson in Managua

Daniel Ortega - one of the world's last figureheads of leftwing revolution but in many eyes no longer an anti-dictatorship icon but a tarnished politician seeking to preserve his hold on power - led his Sandinista party into a watershed national congress in Nicaragua yesterday.

Almost 800 delegates gathered in Managua's Olaf Palme convention centre to hear Mr Ortega begin two days of debate on how to lift the fortunes of the Sandinista Front of National Liberation (FSLN), seen as heroes for their guerrilla campaign that overthrew the hated Somoza family two decades ago but soundly beaten losers of the country's last two presidential elections.

Since the day two months ago when a leading party member accused Mr Ortega of years of sexual abuse, attention has focused more than ever on his future as the party's secretary-general and how the FSLN can hope to renew itself while he continues at the helm.

The party member who made the allegations, Zola Méndez Narváez, is Mr Ortega's 30-year-old step-daughter. Her allegations - that she was abused over the

11 years that the Sandinistas were in power - have for many stripped Mr Ortega of any moral authority.

"Daniel Ortega should resign," says Xanthi Sudriana, a party representative in the Central American nation's parliament, who worked on the FSLN's women's commission until she was forced out, she says, for supporting Ms Narváez. "If he is certain that he has not committed any crime, he should put himself at the disposition of an investigation." The allegations have not been tested in court as Mr Ortega has immunity from prosecution as a member of parliament.

The FSLN is already short of funds and its standard-bearer Barricada newspaper closed down earlier this year. It still has a third of Nicaragua's MPs and mayors in more than 50 towns and villages, but many believe it is in steady decline.

This weekend's congress is meant to begin a transformation. Party spokesmen point out that the leadership will be reinvigorated, with only four of the 13 members of the governing committee seeking re-election. One of the main proposals is to expand the leadership and give representation to sections such as youth and business interests. San-



Attention has focused more than ever on Daniel Ortega's future as the party's secretary-general AP

dinista businessmen say their presence would send a message of change and give confidence that the Front no longer opposes private property.

But it will be a big surprise if Mr Ortega steps down as secretary-general. He is forced out when votes for the post are counted today. Far from weakening his position, his stepdaughter's accusations have made it more likely that a sympathetic "danielista" congress

will close ranks and offer its support. Party spokesman, Freddy García, says: "There is consensus that he should continue as secretary-general. This will not really be discussed. It will be almost automatic."

However, Henry Petrie, another prominent Sandinista disavowed for backing Ms Narváez's allegations against her stepfather, says: "Daniel has been head of the party since 1990 as secretary-general and from that time

the Front has been deteriorating gradually." Forthcoming municipal elections will provide an early test of the FSLN's ability to overcome the current crisis. Mr Ortega is still central to that challenge, says Mr García. "Only Daniel can keep the internal cohesion of the party. Only he can be accepted by its diverse sectors."

But Mr Petrie says: "We have a big problem - and the problem is Daniel."

US anti-terrorist plans focus on cyberattacks

By Mark Szamzan in Washington

Bill Clinton, US president, yesterday unveiled plans for a comprehensive anti-terrorist initiative to focus on protecting computer and electronic networks from outside attack and prepare the public against possible biological warfare.

In a speech at the US Naval Academy, Mr Clinton warned that growing links between critical infrastructure networks such as power systems and water supplies through cyberspace had made such systems more open to potential disruption by outside sources.

"If we fail to take strong action, then terrorists, criminals and hostile regimes could invade and paralyse these vital systems, disrupting commerce, threatening health, weakening our capacity to function in a crisis," he said. "Our vulnerability, particularly to cyberattacks, is real and growing."

To combat the problem, Mr Clinton said the government would make a comprehensive assessment of the risks of such attacks with the aim of developing new systems and stockpiling medicines and vaccines to

Budget plans may spark clash

Fighting Republicans in the US are heading for a clash with President Bill Clinton and moderates in their own party following a congressional committee decision to approve a controversial budget proposal for \$100bn in spending cuts over the next five years, Mark Szamzan writes.

The \$1,720bn measure approved this week by the House of Representatives' budget committee rejects White House proposals for increased allocations to areas such as health and education and predicts a budget surplus of \$34bn in 1999, rising to \$63bn in 2003.

foreign allies. "We can and we must make these critical systems more secure so that we can be more secure."

The White House has appointed Richard Clarke, a senior member of Mr Clinton's national security team, to head a new national centre that will work with government agencies and a wide range of private sector companies to co-ordinate the measures.

The new system is intended to be established by 2000 and become fully operational by 2003.

Mr Clinton said the administration would also work to combat the growing threat of attacks using chemical and biological weapons, upgrading public health systems and stockpiling medicines and vaccines to

protect civilians against such attacks.

He said the new office would take measures to improve health and medical surveillance systems to allow for rapid identification of any bacteria or viruses released by terrorists, while medical and military personnel would be given extra training on how to respond to disease outbreaks.

"We must be able to recognise a biological attack quickly in order to stop its spread," he said.

Mr Clinton also stressed he would continue to support extra funding for biotechnology and other areas of medical research, such as the human genome project, in order to keep the US at the cutting edge of medical technology.

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Canada's stock dealing reputation takes a knock

By Edward Alden and Scott Morrison in Toronto

Canada's reputation as a haven for questionable stock dealings has received further reinforcement, this time over a Toronto Stock Exchange listed company that may have been used as a conduit to launder the proceeds of Russian organised crime.

YBM Magnex International, a Pennsylvania-based industrial magnet and bicycle manufacturer, was dropped from the TSE 300 index of blue-chip companies this week and may be delisted.

But many critics are wondering just how the

company entered the elite index in the first place.

YBM, whose headquarters were raided last week by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation as part of a criminal investigation headed by the organised crime division, is drawing comparisons with Bre-X Minerals, the largest fraud in Canadian stock history. Like the Bre-X case, in which an obscure Calgary gold company milked investors for C\$8bn (US\$4bn), critics are asking how YBM managed to amass a market value of nearly C\$1bn without regulators raising questions about its operations or some of its principal shareholders.

YBM is thought by Canadian and US authorities to be directly linked to Semion Mogilevich, a powerful financial figure.

Mr Mogilevich held 5.5m of 120m shares issued in YBM when it went public in 1995 through a reverse acquisition by Pratec Technologies, a shell corporation on the Alberta Stock Exchange.

Identical shares were owned by Titania and Mila Mogilevich, but it is not known if they are directly related to Mr Mogilevich.

YBM at the time also owned Arigon, a Channel Islands incorporated company which British police suspected was a

money laundering operation for Mr Mogilevich.

Arigon's assets were frozen in 1995 by a London court on application by the Crown in the United Kingdom. That led Alberta officials to halt trading, but the allegations were dismissed by the London court and trading resumed without details of the allegations ever being revealed.

YBM acquired its Toronto Stock Exchange listing in May 1995 and the rapid rise of the stock, which hit C\$20 this spring, propelled it into the TSE 300 in April 1997.

Andrian du Plessis, an independent stock market investigator who first raised questions about YBM, believes regulators should have blocked the company from listing publicly back in 1995.

A second opportunity was last autumn, he said, when

the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC) ordered a re-audit of the company's 1996 financial report. The auditors re-adjusted the company earnings to show that just US\$1.6m of its US\$90m in sales, not the US\$14m originally claimed by the company, were in North America. The other US\$80m in sales was in difficult-to-trace transactions in Russia and eastern Europe.

YBM had sales of US\$138m in 1997 in Europe and North America, according to unaudited statements. About 40 per cent of YBM stock is owned by Canadian mutual fundholders.

John Carson, TSE senior vice-president of market regulation, says the exchange was aware of the 1995 allegations, but says they are unsubstantiated and that Mr Mogilevich's links to the firm are tenuous.

Fingers are also being pointed at the Toronto brokerage houses that heavily promoted the stock. As in the Bre-X case, some brokerages held shares in YBM at the same time their analysts were touting the stock. Two firms, First

Marathon Securities and Griffiths McBurney, were granted options to buy YBM shares at a discount in 1995, and subsequently issued regular buy recommendations for the stock.

"[Brokers] raise money for firms and definitely have an interest in servicing the corporate issuer," says Bill Reid, president of Fairvest Securities, which advises institutional investors. "It's well-known in the industry that some firms are raising money for corporate issuers."

Mr du Plessis says such dealings will continue unless Canada creates a national

securities regulator to replace the current system of provincially regulated exchanges, which often fail to share information with one another.

Canada is the only major industrialised country without a national regulator, says Jeffrey Macintosh, a University of Toronto expert in securities law. But he said that even with a tighter regime it was often tough to distinguish the good from the bad apples. After the fact, people often criticised them for missing what in retrospect seemed obvious.

Larry Walte, who heads the enforcement branch of the OSC, says the commission has been short of staff to investigate allegations. But he says resources have been increased substantially since the Bre-X debacle, and the commission has more active investigations under way than a year ago.

NEWS DIGEST

INVASION CLAIM

Venezuelan native indians halt power link to Brazil

A 700km power line planned to link Brazil with Venezuela by the end of this year has run into opposition from native indians who have forced the Venezuelan state power company, Edelce, partially to halt construction. "We were going to burn their machinery but we just told them to stop working and to send a representative to talk with us," Juvenicio Gómez, a native leader, said in the town of Kavanayen in south-eastern Venezuela.

On Monday a group of Pemon natives will formally present a complaint before the municipal council of Kavanayen. "They are invading our territories without having consulted us," said Mr Gómez. They fear that the arrival of power will bring development of tourism, mining, and forestry, he explained. Most natives in the area do not have title to the land their families have inhabited for generations and struggle to fend off wildcat miners and timber companies.

Venezuela's Congress this week brought forward gubernatorial and congressional elections by a month from December's presidential elections in a bid to improve the chances of discredited traditional parties. The two mainstream parties fear that supporters of independent presidential candidates will vote against them at a regional and local level, analysts say. Raymond Colitt, Caracas

NEW YORK SALE

Record price for American art

"Flags, Afternoon on the Avenue", painted in 1917 by Childe Hassam and depicting American and Allied flags on New York's Fifth Avenue, sold for \$7.9m at Sotheby's in New York on Thursday. The price was more than double the pre-sale estimate and a record for this American Impressionist artist.

The buyer was anonymous, but Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, is building up a collection of important American art. The auction totalled \$42.4m, Christie's highest ever for American art. The Hassam came from the collection of financier Thomas Mellon Evans, whose 78 paintings brought in \$25.34m, a record for a single owner of American art. It beat the record set on Wednesday when Sotheby's disposed of Texas businessman John Eulish's collection of Western art for \$25m, setting 26 artist records. Its highest price was the record \$1.6m paid for "Blacksteak card players" by John Mix Stanley. Antony Thornecroft, London

ATTACK ON SERVICEMEN

Saudi 'behind 1996 bombing'

Saudi Arabia's interior minister yesterday said Saudi nationals were behind the 1996 bombing which killed 19 American servicemen. In remarks reported by Al-Rai Al-Aam, a Kuwaiti newspaper, Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz is quoted as saying the bombing "took place at Saudi hands" and indicating there had been no foreign role in the blast.

The remarks are the first public acknowledgement by the Saudis that internal opposition was responsible for the attack, and they counter US media suggestions that Iran might have been behind the bombing. Roula Khakaf, London

Ethnic Chinese in Indonesian wave

Habibie unveils

ETBA Finance

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Ethnic Chinese bear brunt of Indonesian wave of looting

The successful business community may find life harder after the resignation of President Suharto. **John Ridding** reports

In Jakarta's Chinatown, the house of Lim Sioe Liong, head of the Salim group and Indonesia's richest man, stands burned and derelict. The Lippo Bank, in the Pasar Baru district, has every window smashed. Both it and the Salim group are owned by ethnic Chinese business tycoons - targets last week of rioting and looting which helped bring about the fall of President Suharto.

Shops in the same district carry banners which read *Mitik Prihatin* (Express your concern for ethnic Indonesians). Many Chinese traders and executives, targeted because of their race, and in many cases their association with Mr Suharto, have fled to Singapore.

The trail of destruction leads to the question: will the president's downfall bring even tougher times for ethnic Chinese business enterprises which dominate the Indonesian economy?

Many of the businesses grew from concessions and contracts supplied during

the 32-year tenure of the former Indonesian leader. His departure leaves big groups such as Salim, Sinar Mas, Lippo and Barito Pacific facing a much more uncertain political future, which may have an impact beyond the boardroom: together, ethnic Chinese groups account for some two thirds of private sector income.

"A big question is whether the fall of Suharto and the anti-Chinese sentiment we have seen in the street will also lead to the downfall of some of these enterprises," says the head of Indonesian research at a European investment bank. The closer the association, the bigger the threat. Bob Hasan, head of the Kalimantan timber and plywood group and the first ethnic Chinese to be given a cabinet post by Mr Suharto, is viewed as particularly vulnerable. Yesterday he was excluded from the cabinet named by President Habibie.

Mr Suharto's successor, in many cases the rise of ethnic Chinese groups had roots in Mr Suharto's patronage. Mr Liem, for example,

befriended Mr Suharto when the former leader was a junior general. The president's government helped his group secure virtual monopolies in such commodities as wheat and cement as well as cheap government credit and contracts.

"It was in Suharto's interests to select a group of business leaders, to exert control over the economy," says Linda Lim of the University of Michigan business school. She says Mr Suharto wanted to use a group of companies to implement an industrial policy. "Because ethnic Chinese are politically vulnerable in Indonesia they were easier to control," she says.

That vulnerability was laid bare in last week's rioting, but Ms Lim believes the Chinese will be back. "They are business people who have been in situations like this before. They have lived under armed guards for decades. If they do return, it is likely their influence will be reduced. Reform of the Indonesian economy, deregulation and the removal of monopolies would reduce their role still further.



Looters taking goods from a market in Jakarta last week. AP

The big Chinese business groups may seek to reduce their role in Indonesia in any event. Some analysts say Nestlé, the European food group, has already approached the Salim group about purchasing a stake in Indofood, the group's food

arm. Nestlé declines to comment.

But even if they sell down, few believe the big Chinese groups will pull out. "They haven't been particularly successful in diversifying away from Indonesia," says Ms Lim. "They may play a smaller role in Indonesia, but their roots there often go back several generations."

China cautious over Pakistan nuclear test

By James Kyoge in Beijing

China has indicated that it would not condemn Pakistan if Islamabad conducted nuclear tests, but it would continue to push for strong international censure of India, which exploded five nuclear devices earlier this month, diplomats in Beijing said.

China would, however, be reluctant to see its long-standing diplomatic support for Pakistan being extended into direct military assistance to Islamabad in the event of a conflict between India and Pakistan, the diplomats added.

"The idea of China helping Pakistan to wage a war with India would have a very negative potential to turn into a nuclear conflict is very far-fetched," said one foreign diplomat in Beijing.

Pakistan has been weighing the consequences of any

decision to satisfy domestic demands by following India, its arch foe, in carrying out nuclear tests. China has long been Pakistan's staunchest ally.

"China has told us that it would not do anything which runs contrary to our national interests," said Inam ul Haque, Pakistan's ambassador in Beijing.

But in spite of its relatively accommodating stance, Beijing is understood to be opposed to tests by Pakistan which, it fears, would merely goad India into faster development of nuclear weapons.

China, which fought a brief border war with India in 1962, has been particularly concerned over India's tests because George Fernandes, the Indian defence minister, identified Beijing as a key strategic rival shortly before it carried out the tests.

China was concerned that heightened tensions in the region might lead to calls by the international community for China to start talks with India on border disputes and the question of Tibet, which were sources for bilateral discord, diplomats said.

Yesterday, Beijing blasted the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader and Nobel Peace prize winner who lives in exile in India, for appearing to defend New Delhi's tests.

Such criticism was aimed partly at discrediting international calls that China should resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama on a range of issues, diplomats said.

"The Dalai Lama's recent action contradicts the image he has been fostering. To true peace-loving people, the Dalai Lama has insulted peace," the official China Daily newspaper said.

SALES TUMBLE INVENTORIES IN MARCH UP 27% YEAR ON YEAR

Japanese vehicle makers cut output

By Paul Abrahams in Tokyo

Japan's top five vehicle makers last month scaled back production in a desperate attempt to cope with tumbling sales and ballooning inventories.

Sales of new vehicles in April fell about 7.4 per cent, as consumers continued to steer clear of large ticket items. The fall was all the more disappointing since the comparison with April 1997 should have been easy, given the sharp drop in sales that month when the government increased sales taxes by 2 percentage points.

Japanese big five

Company	Domestic production	% change	Domestic sales	% change	Exports	% change
Toyota	248,838	-14.4	148,886	-2.7	199,951	-11.5
Mitsubishi	108,857	-21.1	62,886	-8.8	45,971	-14.3
Honda	85,888	-10.7	52,884	-11.3	33,004	8.3
Nissan	75,830	-10.3	38,723	-9.1	37,107	-9.4
Mazda	62,847	-10.5	22,739	-4.5	40,108	-10.2
Total	586,122	-12.8	288,333	-7.6	313,781	-10.2

Source: JAMA

Inventories in March were up 27 per cent year on year, said Peter Boardman, automotive analyst at SBC Warburg. Admittedly, inventories last year were low as manufacturers scrambled to meet the rush for vehicles, but stocks were still 12 per cent above March 1996.

All five manufacturers reduced production by more than 10 per cent. Toyota, Honda and Mazda partly compensated for lacklustre

domestic sales by increasing exports.

Nissan, the troubled assembler which is struggling to cope with huge inventories in the US, cut exports by 14 per cent. It also cut overseas production by 14.7 per cent. The group blamed poor demand in Asia and the US, although exports to Europe increased. Production in Mexico was up 25 per cent at 16,860 units.

Habibie unveils one 'dream selection'

By Sander Theones in Jakarta

If much of Indonesia's new cabinet received a lukewarm response yesterday, one new minister got superlatives.

While President Habibie's first cabinet, treated with epithets such as "good enough" and "half-baked", a senior diplomat in Jakarta called Bambang Subianto, the new finance minister, is "almost a dream selection".

Mr Bambang's appointment underscores Mr Habibie's efforts to gain acceptance from the International Monetary Fund, which had

offered former president Suharto \$48bn in international credits if he pushed through reforms.

Mr Suharto disappointed the Fund after three renegotiations of the agreement, and fund officials have not hidden their suspicion of Mr Habibie, who is known mainly for his profligate spending on high-technology projects and his opposition to the free market.

When IMF officials got increasingly frustrated with the mail's pace of reforms in February, the one bright spot they pointed at was Mr

Bambang. The 53-year-old has been appointed chairman of the bank restructuring agency that had been set up in January, following the second IMF agreement, to take over troubled banks and merge them into healthier institutions.

Mr Bambang proved so energetic, in contrast to other ministers, that he quickly ran foul of Mr Suharto's family who controlled several of the collapsed banks. While IMF officials were still singing his praise, he was removed. Mr Bambang stayed on in

the ministry of finance until April 24, when the former finance minister, Fuad Bawazir, sacked him. He had joined the ministry in 1988 after teaching at the University of Indonesia. The new minister will face challenges not seen by his predecessors since 1987, when Frans Seda took charge of the ministry in the midst of economic ruin. The collapse of the rupiah and the ensuing economic crisis have obliterated tax returns, the fall in oil prices has depleted oil revenues, and exports have been hit by the

implosion of the banking system. Expenditures on fuel and food imports have ensured a large budget deficit.

But Mr Bambang's willingness to clash with the powerful Suharto family interests is seen as a successful test of character. If Mr Bambang were to revive his "reform theory, which called for sudden swings in interest rates to boost economic growth, Mr Bambang will have to prove again that he will not just sign along.

Unfinished revolution, Page 6

BUSINESSES FOR SALE

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- The auction will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of article 48a of Law 1882/1980 as supplemented by article 14 of Law 2000/1991 as currently in force; the terms contained in the present announcement and the terms contained in the Offering Memorandum, regardless of whether or not they are accepted by the bidder.
- For a fuller awareness of the company for sale, interested buyers are invited to review, on signature of a confidentiality agreement, the detailed Offering Memorandum and ask for any other information.
- In order to participate in the auction, interested parties must submit a sealed, binding offer to the notary public assigned to the auction, Mrs. Despina Kyriazi-Synodinou, at 48, 25th March Street in Patras, tel. 30-4693-26728 from 9 - 12:00 hours on Monday, 18th June 1998. The submission of offers should be made in person or by a legally authorized representative. Offers submitted beyond the time limit will not be accepted or taken into consideration. Offers must not contain terms upon which their bindingness will depend or which create vagueness with regard to the amount or the method of payment of the offered price or with regard to any other essential points. The liquidator and the creditors maintain the right, at their incontestable discretion, to reject offers which contain terms and exceptions, even if they are higher than other offers, or consider them to be non-compliant, on penalty of cancellation of the offer, by a letter of guarantee from a bank legally operating in Greece, to the amount of two hundred and fifty million drachmas (GDR 250,000,000) as per specimen contained in the Offering Memorandum, valid until its return to the guarantor bank and guaranteeing both the substance of the offer submitted and any improvements made to it.
- The offer will be opened by the notary in his office at 14:00 hours on Monday, 18th April. Interested parties who have submitted binding offers within the time limit are entitled to attend the opening of the offers.
- Others must specifically state the offered amount and method of payment (in cash or on credit, the number of instalments, when they are to be paid and the interest during the entire period of settlement. If there is no reference to a) the method of payment, b) whether the part on credit will bear interest or not, and c) the interest rate to be calculated, it will be considered correspondingly that a) payment will be in cash, b) the part on credit will not bear interest and c) the interest on any part on credit will be calculated at the legal judicial rate in force at the time.
- Essential criteria for evaluating the offers are: a) the size of the amount offered, b) the number of job positions to be created, c) the guarantees provided for settlement of the balance on credit and the fulfilment of other terms, d) the reliability and creditworthiness of the interested party, e) the business plan and in particular the height of proposed investments and f) the commitment to keeping the business running and for how long.
- For all the above points as well as for the remaining terms to be agreed upon (job positions, height of investments, etc.) the buyer must accept penalty clauses, additionally covered by property or other valuable securities, in the event of non-compliance with the terms agreed upon.
- The elements which make up the company's assets shall be sold "as is and where is", more specifically, in their actual and legal condition and at the place where they are situated on the day of signature of the sale contract. The liquidator and the creditors are not responsible for legal or actual defects or deficiencies of any kind of the assets for sale, nor for any incomplete or inaccurate description of them in the Offering Memorandum. Interested parties, should be aware of their own means, and at their own expense, look into and form their own assessment of the objects for sale. The submission of an offer implies that the interested party is fully aware of the legal and actual state of the objects for sale.
- In the event that part payment is on credit, the present value will be taken into account in evaluating the offer, which will be calculated on the basis of a 14% annual discount rate.
- In the event that the person to whom the assets of the company under liquidation are adjudicated fails in his obligation to appear at the time and place specified in the liquidator's invitation, in order to sign the relative contract in accordance with the terms of the present Announcement and of his offer, as finally composed, then the guarantee, as above, is forfeited in favour of the liquidator and the creditors in order to cover all expenses of any kind, time spent and real of hypothetical losses sustained, with no obligation to provide proof of such, and consider the amount as a penalty clause and collect it from the guarantor bank.
- The liquidator bears no responsibility towards participants in the auction, both with regard to the report assessing the offers or to his proposal of the highest bidder. Also, he is not liable and has no obligation to the participants in the auction in the event that the auction is cancelled or declared null and void if its result is deemed unrealistic.
- These parties taking part in the auction and submitting offers do not acquire any right, claim or demand from the present Announcement and from their participation in the auction, against the liquidator or the creditors for any cause or reason.
- According to para. 13 of article 48a of Law 1882/1980 the sale contract and the necessary transfers according from it and any other relative transaction are exempted from taxes, dues or state or third party rights or stamp duties, while the rights and fees of notaries, lawyers, supervisors and managers are restricted to 30%. Any expenses incurred in the sale of the assets (VAT, the fees of lawyers, notaries and managers, judicially supervisors, etc. rights and other expenses) are to be borne by the buyer. The present was drafted in Greek and translated into English. However, in the event of differences occurring in translation, the Greek text will prevail.

In order to obtain the Offering Memorandum and for any additional information, please apply to the offices of the liquidator 1 Entaschous & Vess. Constantinou Sts. Athens, Tel. (301) 7260210, 7260258, 7260508 and Fax (301) 7260854 and at the company's factory at Patras tel. (30463) 22241, Fax (30463) 29622.

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As the extraordinary general meeting held on May 4, 1998 was not able to deliberate and vote on the items of the agenda for lack of quorum, the shareholders of ARGENTINIAN INVESTMENT COMPANY (the "Corporation") are hereby recommended to assist at an extraordinary meeting of shareholders to be held on June 5, 1998 at 10:00 a.m. in Luxembourg, 42 Boulevard Royal, to deliberate and vote on the following agenda:

AGENDA
to amend articles 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 23, 24 and 27 of the articles of incorporation of the Corporation.
The full text of the proposed amendments of the articles of incorporation is available for inspection at the offices of State Street Bank Luxembourg S.A., 42 Boulevard Royal, Luxembourg.
Shareholders are informed that no quorum is required for the meeting to be held on June 5, 1998 and resolutions will be passed at a majority of 2/3 of shares present or represented at the meeting. With respect to Shares held in bearer form, Shareholders who wish to attend and vote at the meeting should deposit their share certificates on June 5, 1998 at the latest with State Street Bank Luxembourg S.A., 42 Boulevard Royal, Luxembourg.

On behalf of the Board of Directors

BRAZILIAN INVESTMENT COMPANY

Sociedad de Inversión y Capital Variable
Registered Office: 42 Boulevard Royal, Luxembourg
P.O. Luxembourg B 1050

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On behalf of the Board of Directors

COLOMBIAN INVESTMENT COMPANY

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AGENDA
to amend articles 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 23, 24 and 27 of the articles of incorporation of the Corporation.
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On behalf of the Board of Directors

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On behalf of the Board of Directors

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On behalf of the Board of Directors

INTERNATIONAL

Miners defy Yeltsin plea on blockades

By Chrystie Freeland in Moscow

Angry Russian miners yesterday defied President Boris Yeltsin's demand that they end their national protest, vowing to block the railways until their overdue wages are paid.

Mr Yeltsin told the striking miners that their actions were "unreasonable" and they should listen to the government's "sensible explanations" of their unpaid salaries. But the president's radio address seemed only to further anta-

gonise the miners, who tightened their blockade of the Trans-Siberian railway.

The miners have been joined by other disgruntled labourers, including shipyard workers in Murmansk who began a blockade of the road to the Northern Fleet's main base.

Share prices tumbled to 16-month lows this week, falling an additional 2.1 per cent to 235.41 on the RTS index yesterday. To defend the wobbly rouble, the central bank has raised interest rates to 50 per cent, while its

reserves have been depleted to \$15.5bn.

Mr Yeltsin told the miners they were exacerbating an already difficult situation, bringing hefty losses for the Russian railway system and factories which have been cut off from their suppliers and customers.

"They [the protests] have ceased to be an instrument of resolving economic issues and have become factors that threaten to cause huge damage to the whole of the country," he said. He insisted that the government

would not give in to mounting demands to loosen its tough monetary policy to pay miners' wages, overdue for as long as two years.

"Some people have been making irresponsible declarations - in order to put out this explosive situation, print a few billion extra roubles," Mr Yeltsin said. "This, categorically, should not be done. It would throw our economy back and be a true catastrophe."

Mr Yeltsin's comments were part of a wider Kremlin effort to shore up confidence

in the economy. One of the biggest investor fears this week has been concern that the government might have to devalue the rouble.

Worries were exacerbated by an official announcement this week that in April the government collected only 86 per cent of targeted taxes. Although cash revenue collection has gradually been improving, Russia's troubled public finances remain one of the weakest aspects of its economy.

Revenue collection has been one of the chief focuses

of the International Monetary Fund, whose mission has been in Moscow this week. Russian officials are hoping the mission will recommend the release of the latest tranche of a three-year loan, a move which would help build confidence.

The government is also counting on revenue from the sale of Rosneft, the largest Russian company still to be privatised. Monday is the closing day for bids for the company, for which the government has set a price floor of \$2.1bn.

CRIMINALS DISAPPEAR SECOND APPEAL

Escapes spark Italian row over courts

By James O'Hara in Rome

The escape from custody of two of Italy's most notorious criminals has this week triggered a furious political row over the failings of the country's justice system.

Licio Gelli, the man at the centre of the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano in 1982, and Pasquale Cutrone, one of the Mafia's top bosses, had both been due to receive final sentences this month after trials lasting a decade.

However, a legal technicality meant both men could be temporarily released from prison while the trials were in progress, allowing them to "disappear" altogether.

Much international attention this week has been on another Italian crime, the theft of Old Masters from a Rome museum. But the escape of the two criminals has had far greater political impact, forcing Italy's justice minister, Giovanni Maria Flick, to offer his resignation on Wednesday.

Romano Prodi's centre-left coalition rallied round the minister on Thursday and he withdrew the resignation letter. But the escapes have exposed the state of Italy's legal system. They happened because Italy is probably the only country in the world in which a defendant is given two rights to appeal after being found guilty of a crime. Indeed, defendants are presumed innocent until the second appeal has finally been lost.

As a result, thousands of criminals - of whom Gelli and Cutrone are merely the bigger fish - are temporarily put at liberty each year because they cannot legally be kept in preventive custody during trials that often last 10 years. Some 93 per cent of people who are found guilty at the first trial stage never go to jail.

The average time for full completion of an Italian civil

trial is between three and five years, compared to one year in France. Bankruptcy proceedings take between three and nine years to complete. Confidence in the system is so low that legal paperwork relating to Italian privatisations and debt issues is often lodged with courts in New York, according to Francesco Giavazzi of Bocconi University.

Ironically, Mr Flick is the first justice minister to grapple with the problem. He has implemented reforms which, for example, reduce the number of judges that sit in on each trial, and create new courts to speed up the judicial process.

But parliament's reform of the justice system has become intensely politicised

Mr Berlusconi opposes reform, saying this would further undermine the power of defendants

around the figure of Silvio Berlusconi, the opposition leader who faces numerous corruption allegations and wishes to restrict the powers of prosecuting magistrates. Yesterday, President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro said it was time Italy dropped the second appeal in criminal trials and moved to the lesser system adopted in other countries. Mr Berlusconi - backed by some ex-Christian Democrats in the Prodi coalition - is opposed, saying this would further undermine the power of defendants.

Only when Mr Berlusconi's battle with the justice system is finally resolved is there likely to be real reform of the courts system.

Splintered French right tries to put up an umbrella of unity

The birth of the Alliance is the fruit of the opposition's failure to challenge the Socialist-led government, reports Robert Graham

The right in France has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to shoot itself in the foot ever since President Jacques Chirac's fateful decision to call early elections last year.

But this self-destructive phase may at last be ending. Leaders of the main right-wing groupings, the Gaullist RPR and liberal UDF, decided last week to form a loose umbrella organisation called the Alliance.

It was the first evidence that they realise a show of unity is essential to prevent further disintegration and to confront the Socialist-led government as a credible opposition.

The Alliance's formation gave all the appearance of a hasty decision reached for widely differing motives. As yet it is far from clear what kind of structure the organisation will have, or indeed whether there can be real unity among groups with views that range from right-wing nationalism to Christian democracy, liberalism and the ideology of the free market.

One of the first issues to be addressed will be whether

there should be a common parliamentary grouping of the RPR and UDF. The voting behaviour of the two groups could not be more different on certain key issues, such as adopting the single European currency.

Philippe Séguin, the volatile RPR leader, is an outspoken critic of surrendering monetary sovereignty and walked out of the vote on the euro. The UDF backed the single currency en bloc in last month's vote.

Even a few weeks ago Mr Séguin was still saying he would never link up with the UDF, despite Mr Chirac's loud talk of the need for unity on the right.

His change of heart is only partly explained by a belated recognition of grass-roots RPR frustration at the lack of unity on the right, and the general failure of the opposition to challenge the government. Another element was his belief that the Alliance offered a means of distancing himself from the behind-the-scenes manoeuvres of the Chirac camp, which treats the president as the head of the opposition in all but name.

Mr Chirac formed the RPR in the late 1970s as a vehicle for his presidential ambitions.

Since he reached the Elysée in 1995, the party has remained in his shadow.

This mattered less while the RPR and the UDF were running the government. However, once rejected by the electorate last May, the RPR found itself with a serious leadership problem. Alain Juppé, the former prime minister, who shouldered the unpopularity of the previous government, resigned and Mr Séguin took over.

The RPR is still paying the price for failing to deliver the promises on jobs and welfare which helped Mr Chirac to win the presidential election.

However much Mr Séguin may wish to make the RPR less of an instrument for the president's ambitions to fight a second term, Mr Chirac has no real rivals - unless he is tainted by the current wave of corruption probes into the Paris city administration which he ran as mayor from 1977-85.

In these circumstances the



Diverging views: Séguin (left) and President Chirac with Madelin

AP and Reuters

Alliance has the attraction of offering a breathing space to reshape the RPR, while deciding nothing about the party's leadership, or that of the right as a whole.

The UDF, formed in 1978 by former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, has never been a single political formation but a group of different liberal pro-European movements.

A highly visible segment, led by Alain Madelin, a former finance minister and free-market leader, opted last weekend to merge directly into the Alliance.

This cast an effective death sentence on the UDF and explains why many of

its members now want to use the Alliance as a platform to forge a new movement rather than let it rest as an umbrella organisation.

The catalyst for change in both right-wing groupings was the split caused by regional elections last March. Five UDF leaders subsequently agreed to form new administrations with the support of the racist National Front.

Charles Millon, a former defence minister and head of the Rhône-Alpes region, pushed matters further by forming a new party, the Right - attracting the bulk of UDF and RPR councillors in the region, while offering

a bridge to moderates in the National Front.

Mr Millon's party has confronted his colleagues head on with the controversial issue of how to treat the National Front - the parish of French politics, which nevertheless attracts 15 per cent of the national vote.

Mr Millon argues he has every right to apply to be part of the Alliance. RPR and UDF leaders in Paris fear this would be profoundly disruptive. On the other hand, if Mr Chirac sees the Alliance as being unhelpful and the Right catching hold, he may find it difficult to ignore his old friend, Mr Millon.

Lebanese rush to run in local elections

By Rania Khairat

Thirty five years is a long time to wait for local leadership and to replenish municipal councils whose members are sometimes long dead, or abroad. So it is hardly surprising the Lebanese are greeting the first local elections in more than three decades with unusual excitement.

Putting aside their concerns about the economy and jitters over Israel's recent offer of conditional withdrawal from southern Lebanon, the Lebanese have immersed themselves in old-style family politics in an election starting tomorrow which many hope can contribute to national reconciliation.

More than seven years after the end of the Lebanese civil war, tens of thousands of candidates, many of them young professionals, are standing for 646 municipal councils and just over 2,000 mayoral seats.

The excitement over the elections, already postponed once by the government, stems partly from the Lebanese people's realisation that they need to refocus attention on the plight of small villages and towns. A main grievance of the opposition has been that many villages and towns, especially in

remote areas, have been left to decay, while Beirut has enjoyed the bulk of the reconstruction spending.

Moreover, for the first time since the end of the tribal warfare, headline Maronite Christian parties opposed to the Syrian domination of Lebanon are taking part in the elections, which will be held in different regions over four consecutive Sundays. These groups boycotted the two legislative polls held since 1991, but they see the local elections as a chance to re-enter the political scene without seeming to sanction the policies of the Beirut government.

The local elections are the only polls not constrained by sectarian quotas - one reason for the reluctance to hold them. In practice, Lebanon's peace is so fragile and national reconciliation so elusive that many are concerned to see the Muslim majority so clearly overshadowed by the Christians.

Indeed, a country of 17 different minority communities has developed a kind of allergy to specific date about the strategies of various religious communities. So in the Beirut municipality, for example, Rafiq Hariri, the prime minister, is expected to divide the list he backs equally among Christians and Muslims to ensure

equal representation - and keep everyone content.

The first phase of the elections tomorrow, in mostly Christian Mount Lebanon, is potentially the most interesting. It will test the strength of the Christian opposition against those Christians who are allied to the government and close to Damascus. Analysts will also be watching to see whether voters pick candidates on religious grounds.

Because many Christian refugees have yet to return to their villages in the Chouf mountains, the government is not holding the elections in about a dozen villages.

In spite of assurances that the elections will be free, the administration is expected to put its weight behind government candidates and there is suspicion there will be irregularities.

But the enthusiasm for the elections has already paid off for Mr Hariri's government, reinforcing the Lebanese pound. Pressure on the currency started to ease this month, with the announcement that the budget deficit for the first four months of the year was 38 per cent of expenditure against a target of 42 per cent. According to Beirut bankers, the central bank has been buying dollars over the past few weeks, for the first time this year.

Bonn bans N-waste cargoes

By Peter Norman in Bonn

A few drops of contaminated water appear to have succeeded where thousands of demonstrators failed.

The Bonn government has halted the transport within Germany and abroad of all radioactive waste from the country's nuclear power stations following the discovery of radiation on the outer surface of a "cask" container for used fuel elements.

The discovery came to light on April 24 after French officials at the reprocessing plant at La Hague found a German container with gamma radiation five times the official limit of 4 becquerels per sq cm.

Although the Bonn envi-

ronment ministry insisted yesterday that the radiation was completely harmless and only one thousandth of that produced by the used fuel elements, the transport of nuclear waste will stay suspended until the phenomenon is explained and the public reassured.

The ban on castor transports means that Angela Merkel, the pro-nuclear environment minister, has put into effect what thousands of nuclear opponents have sought in angry and sometimes violent demonstrations in recent years. Although there was no explanation for the radioactive contamination yesterday, ministry officials suggested it may have arisen

through the evaporation of contaminated water inside the containers during transit which subsequently seeped through screw holes or hair-line cracks.

Mrs Merkel's tough reaction partly reflected her fury on finding that the nuclear power industry was aware of the problem since the 1980s and had failed to inform the authorities.

The ban also underlined the sensitivity of government politicians to nuclear matters in an election year. The opposition Social Democratic and Green parties have both pledged to discontinue nuclear power - the SPD "as quickly as possible" and the Greens "immediately".

Lisbon in bid to lure maritime agencies

By Peter Wise in Lisbon

Portugal yesterday launched Expo '98, a \$2bn international fair on the theme of the oceans, with a bid to make Lisbon the permanent world capital for maritime affairs, government officials said.

The socialist government is to pay Estoril (\$80m) to acquire four buildings at the 60 hectare exhibition site on the Lisbon waterfront in an attempt to persuade two new international maritime organisations to establish their headquarters in the Portuguese capital.

One of these is the European Ocean Agency, a co-ordinating body that the European Union is considering setting up. The other is the World Ocean Observatory, an environmental watchdog proposed by the Independent World Commission for the Oceans.

The IWCO, headed by Mario Soares, Portugal's leading elder statesman, is to present a report to the United Nations "Oceans and Society on the Threshold of the Third Millennium" at Expo '98 in September.

Set up by the UN in 1986, the IWCO has been diagnosing the state of the oceans and will be presenting proposals on how best to use and protect their resources.

Portugal also hopes to attract the International Oceanographic Commission, an existing body, to set up permanent headquarters in Lisbon. Portuguese leaders are backing their bid to bring the organisation to Lisbon with strong diplomatic efforts, according to government officials.

They believe Portugal has a historical, scientific and geographic vocation for maritime affairs and hope that the attractions and efficient organisation of Expo '98, the biggest world fair to date, will sway decisions in their favour.

One of the exhibition buildings the state is acquiring will become the permanent cabinet headquarters of the Portuguese government after Expo '98 closes in September.

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WEAPONS EMBARGO UNITED NATIONS STANCE APPEARS TO SHIFT

UN lawyers rule on Sierra Leone arms

By Laura Silber in New York and David Wighton in London

The United Nations' top lawyers yesterday ruled that supplying arms to the Nigerian-led peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone was legal. The confidential decision appeared to undermine accusations that Sandline International, the British company, had violated a United Nations arms embargo on Sierra Leone.

It also appeared to mark a shift in the UN's earlier view that any supply of arms to

Sierra Leone represented a breach of the arms embargo. The move calls into question the advice the British Foreign Office gave to Sandline about supporting efforts to restore Sierra Leone's deposed president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

Robin Cook, the foreign secretary, told the House of Commons last week that Sandline had been told the embargo "included everyone connected with Sierra Leone".

It has been assumed that this was meant to cover

Ecomog, the West African peacekeeping force, but the Foreign Office was last night unable to confirm the details of the advice.

Although Sandline has maintained that it did not break the embargo by supplying Ecomog, it did sign a deal directly with President Kabbah. However, following an inquiry by Customs & Excise, the government last week announced that Sandline would not be prosecuted for breaking the embargo. The UN ruling, which considered whether

the supply of arms to Ecomog was legal under paragraph 6 of resolution 1132 (October 1997), was requested by the Security Council's sanctions committee on Sierra Leone.

It says: "Ecomog should be exempt from the application of the arms embargo with respect to its activities undertaken with the consent of the council."

Paragraph Six of resolution 1132 says: "All states shall prevent the sale or supply to Sierra Leone, by their nationals or from their ter-

ritories, or using their flag vessels or aircraft of petroleum and petroleum products and arms and related material of all types..."

The document, which the sanctions committee was due to consider last night, said: "While Ecomog does not benefit from an explicit general exemption from the application of Paragraph 6 of resolution 1132, it must enjoy an implied partial exemption for the purposes defined by the Council in that resolution. Any other interpretation would lead to

a paradoxical situation in which the Council while entrusting Ecomog with important responsibilities at the same time deprived it of the means to carry out those responsibilities."

The UN in 1997 slapped an arms and oil embargo on Sierra Leone after Mr Kabbah, the legally elected president, was ousted in a military coup. It gave Ecomog a mandate to enforce it, recognising the presence of West African peacekeeping forces in the country at the time.

IRISH REFERENDUMS 'MY MEMORY FOCUSES ON THE BLOODSHED THAT THE NORTH HAS SUFFERED'

Mood of hope sways voters south of border

By Jimmy Burns in Dundalk

A giant cardboard poster has been erected in this town in the Republic of Ireland in a final attempt to demoralise the British and Irish prime ministers and win No votes in the referendum about the Northern Ireland peace agreement and changes to the constitution of the republic.

Under the words "death of a nation" it carried a picture of a gloomy Tony Blair, the UK prime minister, with a scythe in one hand and Bertie Ahern, prime minister of the republic, in the other. Beneath them both was the shattered shape of a United Ireland haemorrhaging blood.

The poster is the work of dissident Republicans who have led the No vote campaign on the grounds that the abandonment of the republic's territorial claim to Northern Ireland in articles two and three of its 80-year-old constitution is a betrayal of Irish nationalism. Dundalk is 10 miles south of the border with Northern Ireland.

But beyond the big poster and a few dozen smaller ones placed around the town, the No campaign has proved a low-key affair here and yesterday appeared to have conceded defeat. The dissidents usually outspoken local representatives Bernardette McKevitt-Sands - sister of Bobby Sands, the Irish Republican Army hunger striker who died in prison in 1981 - yesterday refused to make any comment other than to threaten to bring in security guards to deal with journalists.

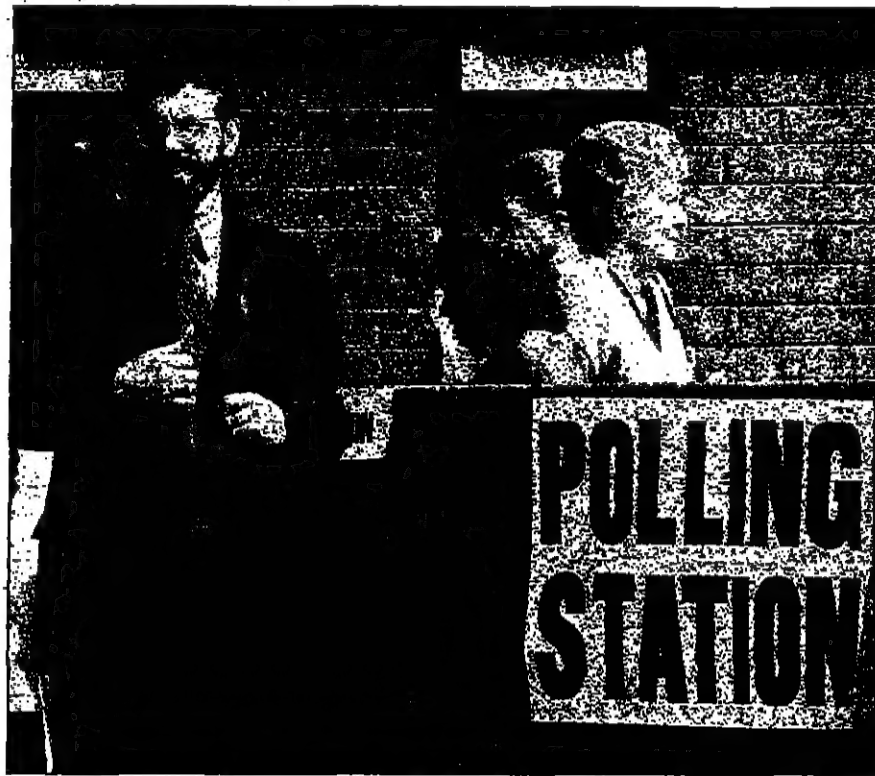
Beyond the fashionable print shop which Ms Sands

owns, there was an altogether more upbeat and festive mood in the town as it prepared to turn today's traditional Maytime festival into a celebration of peace.

In the town hall where the main polling booth had been set up, there was the biggest turnout for a vote ever remembered in the town. "I grew up with my parents and grandparents and my history books reminding me about Irish heroes in the fight against the British, but my memory focuses on the bloodshed that the North has suffered over the last 25 years and the most important thing for me now is peace," said Helen Karmy, a poll clerk who together with her husband had voted Yes to the changes in the constitution.

Nearby Gerald Berrill, caretaker of the town hall, said: "The territorial claim is important. I think that gives all the lives that have been lost on account of it changing the articles in our constitution is a reasonable price to pay for peace."

Others expressed the view that the town would stand to



Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams leaves a polling booth in Belfast after voting

gain in economic terms from a political settlement involving the north. Dundalk has for long been tarnished with the image of being one of the IRA's hotbeds in times of pursuit across the border from the north into the republic.

"If there is a big Yes vote this will bring stability North and South, and that is what investors want," local

newspaper Donal McArdle said.

He added: "I think what we are seeing is the end of the era of the dinosaurs. I'm looking forward to the day when we no longer talk about North and South but Ireland - a region that is part of Europe."

Two British soldiers jailed for life for killing a Roman Catholic in Belfast

yesterday lost their attempt to force the UK government to refer their case immediately to the Life Sentence Review Board. The decision, by the High Court in Belfast, Northern Ireland, means that Scots Guardsmen James Fisher, 27, and Mark Wright, 22, will have to wait until October for the next appraisal by the board.

The two soldiers - who are still in the Army - were convicted in 1996 of murdering 18-year-old Peter McBride near his home in the New Lodge area of the city.

The judge said the UK government had failed adequately to explain the reasons why the two soldiers were being treated as they were. He granted a declaration that there had been a failure to provide proper and adequate reasons for the decision to distinguish the cases of Fisher and Wright from that of another soldier who was convicted of murder and released after serving a shorter time in prison.

Call for global team to tackle tax evasion

By Jim Kelly, Accountancy Correspondent

The Inland Revenue says an international task force should be set up, drawn from the G8 leading industrialised nations, which would investigate multinational companies suspected of tax evasion.

Nick Montagu, chairman of the Revenue, said the recent G8 agreement on combating financial crime had put fighting evasion alongside international efforts to curb drug trafficking, prostitution and protection.

"What I think we are now realising is that the size of the prize and the sophistication of the tools elevates tax-related crime into that league," Mr Montagu told the Financial Times.

The chairman's remarks will be seen as the first signal that global fiscal chiefs are determined to co-operate to catch companies that falsify tax records and break the law to pay most of their tax in countries with low tax rates.

But the tone of his comments will also be seen as an early warning to large companies to tread carefully in the grey area between illegal tax evasion and the use of sophisticated legal tax avoidance schemes to minimise global tax bills.

Mr Montagu said the G8 had set the strategy and it was for national tax authorities to build the framework. He expected details to emerge this summer and said the initiative would be linked to similar work in the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

He said there was an urgent need to co-operate on curbing tax evasion because of the growth in electronic commerce. "In that kind of case you would be talking about a kind of taskforce. I'm looking to the future. A combined detective force if you like," said Mr Montagu.

The G8 initiative is also likely to investigate tax avoidance - the use of legal methods designed by companies and tax advisers to reduce global tax liabilities. Such situations were "highly undesirable," said Mr Montagu.

Part of the G8 initiative is likely to concentrate on transfer pricing - the way multinational companies allocate profit to the different jurisdictions in which they operate.

NEWS DIGEST

THE ECONOMY

Imports outstrip exports by \$6bn in first quarter

Britain has recorded its biggest inflation-adjusted trade deficit for 7½ years, restraining economic growth despite continued strong domestic spending. Imports outstripped exports by £3.6bn (\$6bn) in the first quarter, adjusted for seasonal factors and measured in 1990 prices, the Office for National Statistics said yesterday. Exports fell more sharply than imports, delivering a deficit that has doubled in just two quarters. The widening trade position meant that national output grew by 0.5 per cent in the first quarter even though domestic spending grew three times as quickly. The statistics office has revised the first quarter growth rate up slightly from 0.4 per cent.

Consumer spending increased by a robust 1 per cent in the first quarter. This outstripped a 0.8 per cent rise in retail sales largely because strong car sales. Sales of durable goods were also robust.

Investment spending rose by a healthy 1.3 per cent, but strong consumer and business expenditure was offset in part by lower government spending. Robert Chote, London

HEALTH AT WORK

Keyboard injury test case won

Five former Midland Bank workers yesterday won a legal test case when a judge in London ruled that they suffered from "diffuse" repetitive strain injuries (RSI) as a result of overworking at keyboards and awarded them compensation totaling more than £50,000 (\$83,500). The case is the first in which a UK court has ruled that diffuse RSI is a physical injury which can leave employers open to pay damages. Although it provides no legally binding precedent, the case could lead to a stream of successful claims by others suffering from diffuse RSI, said Bifu, the finance workers' trade union which brought the action.

The five former employees, all women, had worked at the processing centre of the bank (an HSBC offshoot) in southern England, where they used keyboards to keep records of transactions. All five developed pains in their arms, necks and shoulders which were classified as diffuse RSI. Unlike more specific variations of RSI, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, the diffuse condition has proved extremely difficult to diagnose medically. John Mason, London

JAPANESE EMPEROR'S VISIT

Ex-prisoners threaten snub

Japanese residents of the UK were urged yesterday to turn out in large numbers to welcome Emperor Akihito during his visit next week which has prompted the threat of a demonstration by aggrieved former British prisoners of war. Itaru Umezaki, deputy ambassador at the Japanese embassy in London, said on BBC radio he believed most British people would welcome the emperor. His government was relying on the British people's sense of "reason and dignity".

"I would certainly welcome Japanese nationals residing here in the UK - there are about 55,000 Japanese people living in the UK," he said. "Many of them would come to celebrate and welcome the visit." Former military and civilian prisoners of the war with Japan say they will turn their backs on the Emperor and whistle the wartime anthem *Kogay* as the Emperor and Queen Elizabeth pass by in a horse-drawn carriage in London on Tuesday. Emperor's visit, Page 7

MOTOR INDUSTRY

Recall for 34,000 GM cars

More than 34,000 Corsa cars and vans are being recalled by Vauxhall, the UK offshoot of General Motors, because of a possible engine wiring problem, the company said yesterday. The recall involves 26,187 vehicles built between August 1993 and December 1995, and 8,134 built since August 1996. Vauxhall said the problem could lead to engines either not starting or cutting out.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Retailer to sign union deal

Dixons, the electrical retailer and one of Britain's most determinedly non-union companies, is close to signing a recognition agreement with the AEEU electrical and engineering union. The deal will delight trade unions, which believe Dixons will be the first of many employers to concede recognition before they are forced to do so by the government's proposed employment rights legislation, published on Thursday. The agreement, still subject to final approval by the Dixons board, will also embarrass the opposition Conservative party, which said the government's policy threatened a return to the "anarchy and strife" of the 1970s. Sir Stanley Kalms, Dixons chairman, has been a prominent Conservative supporter and until recently his company was a significant contributor to the party's funds. Andrew Bolger, London

MILLENNIUM BOMB

Banks make contingency plans

British banks are making contingency plans to deal with a surge in demand for banknotes next year as people stockpile cash, fearing that the millennium computer bomb - the inability of older systems to recognise the year 2000 - might bring payment systems to a halt. "It is almost certain that the normal seasonal increase in demand for cash will be at an all-time high in the two weeks before the millennium," the Bank said in a report on preparations in the financial sector. George Graham, London

BRITISH AIRWAYS DENIAL THAT OFFSHOOT IS DESIGNED TO DRIVE OTHER CUT-PRICE CARRIERS OUT OF BUSINESS

Rival seeks to upstage Go's first flight

By Charles Batchelor, Transport Correspondent

Go, British Airways' new low-cost airline, took to the air yesterday with the owner of one of its main rivals on board. Stellos Haji-Ioannou, chairman of no-frills EasyJet, and six of his staff arrived in his airline's distinctive orange uniforms in an attempt to upstage the Go launch.

The orange livery contrasted with Go's green and

purple. Also on board the Boeing 737 flight from London Stansted airport, to Rome was Barbara Cassani, Go chief executive, who presented Mr Haji-Ioannou with a giant boarding card. EasyJet is based at London Luton airport.

The two rivals were all smiles when they met, but earlier Mr Haji-Ioannou said Go had been set up to drive low-cost rivals out of business.

EasyJet and BA will meet

in the High Court in London in the next few months in a dispute about allegations by EasyJet that its larger rival is abusing a dominant market position by cross-subsidising Go. A judge ruled last week that there was a case to answer.

David Magliano, Go sales and marketing director, denied that it had been set up merely to drive other no-frills airlines out of business. He said: "The low-cost market is set to quadruple in the

next five years and there is huge potential for growth." Passengers on the flight welcomed the increasing airline rivalry. "Competition is good for the passenger as long as the airline is providing a good service," said Steven Kerton, a lawyer from southern England.

Passengers paid £100 (£165) return for their tickets to Rome. The flight took off on time and arrived 15 minutes early. Food on flights is not included in the fare.

A second Rome flight took off later yesterday while twice-daily services between Stansted and Milan start today and Stansted-Copenhagen flights begin on June 5. All are at a standard return fare of £100.

Go's launch poses a challenge to all cut-price operators, including Ryanair and Debonair, and represents the latest stage in an increasingly fierce battle that is expected ultimately to claim casualties.

Insolvency profession may have to rescue its own brand image

Practitioners increasingly want a label such as 'company doctor' or 'business engineer' rather than 'corporate undertaker', writes Jim Kelly

There used to be little news for a company quite as bad as being told that the man from Cork Gully was at the front counter.

Liquidators, receivers, administrators and their ilk spell bad news, even if they eventually save a business heading for the rocks.

In today's business culture, long after Cork Gully ceased to be independent, the problem lingers among the thriving profession of insolvency practitioners. There is still a widespread fear of what has become known as the "i-word" - insolvency.

Cork Gully is now part of Coopers & Lybrand and its name is most often used on "dead cases" - where liquidation is the likely option.

insolvency profession's leading figures will gather in Paris for the annual conference of the Society of Practitioners in Insolvency - otherwise known as SPI.

Their skills - particularly in rescuing companies before they need formal help from receivers or liquidators - are in great demand, particularly today in south-east Asia. But there is a feeling that they must address a growing problem with their brand image.

Their new president, Murdoch McKillop, of Arthur Andersen, must be keenly aware that this is no time for complacency. His skills helped save the business that was Leyland-Daf. But there is a danger that the profession is seen as a narrow church practising skills associated with the likes of

Cork Gully - corporate undertaking with the occasional foray into pathology.

SPI has been a big success in its seven years of existence. It has been regularly consulted by UK governments as they have sought to build the "rescue culture". The membership is healthy at 4,300 subscribers including the UK's 1,800 licensed insolvency practitioners - those allowed to operate as receivers, liquidators and administrators. The problem is that the skills sought by companies - and those at risk at the banks - are not best sold under the banner of the "i-word".

Banks increasingly look to rescue situations outside formal insolvency. The insolvency profession in the UK has pioneered informal rescue operations now widely known internationally as the "London approach". Under this approach, lenders co-operate to try to save big companies that run into

financial trouble. Internationally there is pressure for a similar system of "ringmasters" for cross-border corporate failures.

Governments also want to nurture a rescue culture - complaining that too many good businesses are driven into insolvency by hasty creditors. Such innovation in the UK as the proposed "moratorium" - a period during which creditors can be held at bay while a rescue plan is put in place - may not require licensed practitioners. There is, in short, a need for a broader church at SPI.

Delegates at the SPI conference must consider whether others should be admitted to their ranks: the UK's "Big Six" firms are full of experts in corporate turnaround, while firms of "company doctors" work effectively to save businesses outside formal insolvency. A recent survey found that more than 2,000 UK compa-

nies turn to company doctors every year - although many will be members of SPI.

If SPI could somehow drop the "i-word", it might also, some argue, help stop the notorious rise of poorly qualified advisers. They strip

There is still a widespread fear of what has become known as the "i-word" - insolvency

assets, get in the liquidators, and often leave the directors facing disqualification.

They get a lot of business because managers of small to medium-sized companies are scared of the "i-word" and avoid seeking

out qualified practitioners.

Some leading members of SPI think it should drop the "i-word" and bring in outsiders to a wider organisation that would be subject to a broad code of conduct. They argue that something needs to be done to bring public perception of the profession in line with what it actually does.

30 per cent is already doing intensive care work and about half the licensed practitioners at the Big Six are involved in rescue work. "It's leading the rescue culture - the reality is there - it's a question of perception," says one SPI member.

The view that company directors need to be persuaded to seek help earlier when their businesses hit trouble is likely to carry the day. The "i-word" may well have to go and a user-friendly substitute be found: the big question is what.

Corporate rescuers? Company doctors? Business engineers? The hunt is on.

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
in purchasing a plot of land of
"HELLENIC CHEMICAL PRODUCTS AND
FERTILIZERS COMPANY SA"
of Athens, Greece

"ETHNIKI KEFALAIOTI S.A. Administration of Assets and Liabilities" of the
Hellenic Republic, Athens 10564, Greece, in its capacity as Liquidator of the
"HELLENIC CHEMICAL PRODUCTS AND FERTILIZERS COMPANY SA", a
company with its registered office in Athens, Greece, the "Company", presently under
special liquidation according to the provisions of article 114 of Law 1893/1990, by virtue
of Decision No. 429992 of the Athens Court of Appeal, in compliance with Decision
774201/1992 of the same court, which approved the sale of the production units of
the Company following instructions of the majority creditors, i.e. National Bank of
Greece SA and ETVA SA (which executed parties to submit within twenty (20) days
from the publication of this call, non-binding written expressions of interest in purchasing
the assets mentioned below).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PLOT OF LAND

This is a plot of land, the area of which amounts to approx. 14,995 sq. m., located in
"Penteli", about 1200 km of the National Road Athens-Lamia. This is surrounded
by an old fence and has been used as a summer camp. It is a partly agricultural plot,
the non agricultural section of which can be built on.

SALE PROCEDURE

The company's assets will be sold by way of Public Auction in accordance with the
provisions of Article 456 of Law 1893/1990, (as supplemented by art. 14 of
Law 2200/1991 and subsequently amended) and the terms set out in the call for tenders
for the sale of the above assets, to be published in the Greek and foreign press on the
date provided by law.

**SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST - OFFERING
MEMORANDUM**

For the submission of Expression of Interest and in order to obtain a copy of the
Offering Memorandum, please contact the Liquidator, "ETHNIKI KEFALAIOTI S.A.
Administration of Assets and Liabilities", 74 Chrysoskolon St, Athens 10564,
GREECE. Tel. +30-1523.14.64 - 87 fax +30-1-521.7475 (Attorney Liquidation
Department).

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

FINANCIAL TIMES

Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL
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Saturday May 23 1998

Asian crisis:
the sequel

The longer the Asian crisis goes on, the greater the repercussions for the rest of the world could be. And at the moment, the end does not seem in sight. Worse, another twist of the vicious circle, with further currency devaluations and resulting financial problems, still cannot be ruled out. What are the risks to the health of the world economy?

The effect of the Asian crisis on the west has, so far, been fairly benign. The disinflationary impact has kept interest rates low, and capital flight from Asia may have contributed to surging stock markets. But the full force of the crisis has not yet been felt. Although the effect of lower Asian imports is already apparent, the expected export boom is just beginning, as exporters have suffered from a lack of finance.

And do not expect Asia's recovery to be as speedy as that of Mexico after its mid-1990s financial crisis. Quite apart from the political troubles, there remain serious obstacles to reform, not least the clean-up of the financial systems and the resolution of private-sector debt problems.

Even so, the share of east Asian trade in the gross domestic product of the US and the EU is relatively small and the output effects will be limited. The problems of the Japanese economy will have a larger, and longer-lasting, impact on the west. Contrary to the hope that recovery in Japan might help the crisis-stricken Asian economies out of trouble, the Japanese economy has become part of the problem. The latest fiscal package may just have been enough to prevent a massive recession, but it will not drag Japan out of stagnation: the economy is widely expected to shrink this year, while its trade surplus is growing rapidly.

Severe pressure

Even if the economy does start to pick up, the trade surplus is likely to persist. Japan has a massive surplus of savings over investment, due to its ageing population and to pessimism over growth. Without a much bigger fiscal deficit, or a fall in the savings ratio, the result will be a current account surplus as the Japanese acquire overseas assets.

The good news is that domestic demand in both the US and the EU, helped by the fall in interest rates resulting from the crisis, is strong enough to withstand a drag on economic growth from trade. Certain sectors will undoubtedly come under severe pressure. And world growth may not reach the heights of 1996-97, when global output grew at an annual rate of 4.1 per cent. But if

the IMF forecast of 3.1 per cent is achieved, world output growth will still be stronger than in the global slowdown of the early 1990s, when output growth dipped to 1.2 per cent.

Even if the output effects are limited, though, the impact on trade balances will be large - and damaging trade frictions could easily result. This is particularly true for the US, which is absorbing much of the trade adjustment. The OECD expects the US trade deficit to grow to \$226bn (2.5 per cent of GDP) this year, and \$260bn next year.

Protective barriers

Congress's instinctive reaction will be to put up protective barriers. It will take a skillful president to persuade congressmen that free trade, by prising open new markets, could actually help the US trade position.

More ominously, there is now talk of an Asia "phase two" - a further round of devaluations. Japan and China in particular are struggling to cope with their loss of competitiveness. Both are huge economies, suffering from price deflation, with falling output, growth rates and fragile banking systems. To make matters worse, both are on the brink of major structural reforms. For these countries, exports are an extremely important source of growth, but are threatened by the cheap exports of the Asian crisis economies.

Policymakers in both countries are acutely aware of the risks of a devaluation. The Japanese know that a further fall in the yen - already at a seven-year low - could spark off more capital flight. And while the non-convertible Chinese renminbi is not at the mercy of the markets, the Chinese authorities know that a renminbi devaluation could easily trigger a destabilising fall in the Hong Kong dollar.

But domestic economic troubles could weaken their resolve. If either, or worse still both, currencies were to suffer a major devaluation, the effect on the world economy would dwarf the impact of the Asian crisis so far. A wider new round of devaluations could be triggered, and western stock markets would certainly be at risk.

Even if this is avoided, both countries still have an incentive to aim for a devaluation in the medium term. And even a gradual and orderly devaluation would have a big impact on the pattern of world trade. It is through its effect on these currencies that the Asian crisis will have its most lasting economic impact.

When B.J. Habibie took the oath of office as president of Indonesia this week, he did so against the backdrop of the national symbol of the eagle and the motto that reads "Unity through diversity". At the moment, diversity is more in evidence.

With the departure of President Suharto, Asia's longest serving leader, many different groups now hold the key to the fate of the 200m Indonesians. In particular, the interaction of students, the military, opposition leaders, and the unemployed will determine whether the carnage that accompanied the country's previous change of government in 1965-66 can be avoided this time. For the moment, Mr Habibie is in the spotlight. But he has little support, not much time and a cast of competing characters.

Like the new president, these other players are shocked to find themselves where they are today. "It is hard to believe, after so long, that we have managed to get rid of Suharto," says Aji, a 24-year-old science student and one of the thousands who occupied the parliament buildings this week, demanding the president's resignation.

Demanding more democracy and revolting against the corruption of the regime, the students were in the vanguard of Indonesia's people power movement. The death of six of their number earlier this month inflamed public opinion and broadened opposition to Mr Suharto's regime. As news of the president's speech reached the students at parliament, Aji and his fellow students erupted into celebration, waving flags and banners.

For Amien Rais, too, it was a moment of triumph. Leader of the 30m-strong Muhammadiyah, one of the biggest Muslim parties in the world's largest Islamic nation, Mr Rais has emerged as Mr Suharto's most potent critic. "He was the only one with the courage to stand up and demand Suharto should go," says Yusuf, an unemployed worker, sitting on the pavement near Jakarta's Chinatown. Objective achieved, a satisfied Mr Rais bid farewell to Mr Suharto. "We are not a kingdom, but he behaved like a king, a Japanese king."

Celebration and satisfaction, however, have proved short-lived. Late last night, security forces went in to clear the students from parliament. Even before then, Aji and others had been waving new, anti-Habibie banners. "Suharto no, Habibie no," cried a headscarved woman next to Aji. "They are just the same."

Even if this is avoided, both countries still have an incentive to aim for a devaluation in the medium term. And even a gradual and orderly devaluation would have a big impact on the pattern of world trade. It is through its effect on these currencies that the Asian crisis will have its most lasting economic impact.



Suharto's departure has done little to remove Indonesia's crisis. Arguably, it has just substituted one set of problems for another. Until last night's intervention, Mr Habibie had been trying to send the right signals. He had described the students' protests as "a breath of fresh air". That now rings hollow.

Some had sought encouragement from the cabinet he unveiled yesterday. While most of the senior officials remained the same, the former president's friends and relatives were pushed aside. Tuti, Mr Suharto's daughter, was removed, as was Bob Hasan, the former leader's business associate and golfing partner. Diplomats welcomed the appointment of Bambang Subianto, a respected former deputy minister, as finance minister. But in spite of these moves, the cabinet lacks heavyweight members from outside the ruling elite. "You can understand that they don't want to board the Titanic," quipped one observer. "But failure to signal a clear break from the past will prove costly."

Mr Habibie has also been short on the details of what he proposes to do about democratic

reform. Mr Rais wants new elections or a special session of the country's People's Constitutional Assembly, the top constitutional body, to elect a new president.

Mr Rais has not been looking for a fight. It may be his streak of moderation, apparent in his brand of Islam and in last week's decision to call off a mass protest, fearing a Tiananmen-type tragedy at the parliament building. It may be the calculation of a politician with his eye on the presidency. But in any event, the Muslim leader is reserving judgment on Mr Habibie. "I want to tell the students to be realistic. Demanding that Habibie resign immediately is too much. He promised many things and gave us hope," says Mr Rais.

But time is not on Mr Habibie's side. Mr Rais insists the new president is a transitional figure. Three months, or six at the maximum, should be the length of his term. If there is no progress towards democratic reform, he will call his supporters on to the streets again, he says.

Perhaps even more alarming, an economic timebomb is ticking beneath Mr Habibie. Yusuf, the former construction worker id-

ling near Chinatown, is one of millions joining the ranks of the jobless. Over the past year their numbers have swelled from 4m to more than 12m.

Yusef says he was not involved in the looting that ravaged the surrounding shops, targeting ethnic Chinese businesses. But he is getting desperate. "Food prices are becoming too high, it is very difficult to eat," he says. He is under no illusions about what lies ahead. "I don't think there will be any jobs, and prices will go up."

Mr Habibie has little chance of a grace period with international investors. As a champion of grand projects and "strategic industries" (such as the country's programme to build civil aircraft), he is at odds with the austerity conditions required by the International Monetary Fund for its \$43bn rescue package - and this is likely to remain true even if, as many expect, the conditions are relaxed a bit.

When Mr Habibie was nominated as vice-president in March, shares fell 10 per cent. Yesterday, the first day of trading under his presidency, the index jumped by 5 per cent. But scepticism

remains. "Let's just say Habibie has a credibility problem with the market," says one US investment banker. "Add to that a risk of further upheaval and the smart money will not be rushing back."

Standing in the background while Mr Habibie took his presidential oath was General Wiranto, chief of the armed forces. He stepped forward to declare the military's support for the new president, promising that the army would prevent further unrest after 500 died in Jakarta during riots last week. Last night's crackdown on the students underlined the willingness of the security forces to implement this commitment.

Mr Suharto, of course, also had the support of the military - until Wednesday night when (according to reports in Jakarta yesterday) Gen Wiranto told Mr Suharto to step down. While the army chief is a moderate and is thought to favour a shift towards a more professional army, the army clearly remains the country's kingmaker.

So far, the relationship between Gen Wiranto and Mr Habibie seems steady. Gen Wiranto remains in the cabinet as defence minister, despite pressure from some in the Habibie camp to split the roles of defence minister and chief of staff. Yesterday, he called for the students to go back to their campuses to study. "I think everything is over now."

That seems unlikely. Nine months ago, when the currency collapsed in Thailand and the cracks began to open up in Asia's hitherto-impressive economic facade, hardly anyone would have thought that the crisis would culminate by sweeping away a leader who, for all his faults, had lifted 200m people out of grinding poverty. If they had, they might well have thought that the resignation of an entrenched president after a month of violence, and with no real preparation for a successor, would be risky at best. At that time, most people thought Indonesia's economy was in good shape, even if other Asian countries were not.

Since then, many faults have become evident in the management of the economy and the extent of corruption in Mr Suharto's family has become known.

All the same, with students already stepping up criticism of Mr Habibie and the economy a long way from recovery, Indonesia's problems could get much worse. Many fear that national income could fall by 15 per cent or even more this year - an alarming possibility, especially if accompanied by food shortages, as seems likely. If this happens, the dramas of Mr Suharto's departure are unlikely to mark the end of Indonesia's revolution. And with the memory of last week's violence still fresh, the next scenes could prove a lot more unpleasant.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Food label compromise fails consumers

From Mrs Ruth Evans and others.
Sir, The agreement brokered by the UK government on EU labelling of genetically modified foods is, indeed, a compromise - of consumers' right to know how the food they eat is produced ("Compromise on EU food labelling", May 21).

We are not opposed in principle to the process of genetic modification. However, we recognise that many consumers, for a variety of reasons, do not wish to eat food from GM sources. For many, the issue is not merely whether genetically modified material can be detected within food - the basis of the new ruling - but the

process of genetic modification itself. In this sense, the UK government's solution fails utterly to address consumers' concerns. Consumers must be able to make an informed choice between foods produced using genetic modification and those grown conventionally. For them to be able to do this, labelling must be based on derivation, rather than mere analysis of chemical differences. Segregation at source of GM produce and traceability through the food chain are the best ways to ensure full and accurate information.

Survey after survey has shown that consumers throughout

Europe want GM food to be clearly labelled. By ensuring that most foods produced using genetic modification will not be labelled as such, the UK government has done them a great disservice.

Ruth Evans, director, National Consumer Council, Secretary.

Consumers in Europe Group, Sheila McKenna, director, Consumers' Association, from 28 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH, UK

Porters are called for

From Dame Ailsa Meynell.
I noticed with interest in "Rail-pieces" (Weekend FT Travel section, May 9-10) that SNCF, the French railway, has arranged a door-to-door, 24-hour baggage delivery service, in addition to more portering at stations.

I write as the mouthpiece of a group of pensioners who are convinced that if the government's policy of getting more people to use public transport instead of their cars is to succeed, the reintroduction of porters - a lost form of employment since the 1960s - on railways in the UK is one essential step. Without it, the elderly (and others, particularly the disabled) who have luggage to carry will not use trains. Because, under present legislation, Railtrack is only allowed to operate the 14 largest of its 2,500 stations, our simple proposal that it should reintroduce porters is not practicable. However, we greatly hope that we may be able to interest Virgin Line to include it in its plans to modernise the west coast main line.

Ailsa Meynell, Lion House, High Street, Lavenham, Suffolk, Suffolk CO10 9PR, UK

Precision essential if confusion is to be avoided

From Mr John Retic.
Sir, In his very interesting article "Plumbing the depths of space" (Weekend FT: The Nature of Things, May 16-17), Professor Andrew Derrington informs us that the air density where the space shuttle flies is about a trillion times less than at earth's sea level.

But suppose Prof Derrington had ten apples. Then suppose he had one time less apples. How many would he have left? As he is a professor of science, Prof Derrington will immediately

know that the answer is no apples. So will he now tell us how many apples he would have if he had a trillion times less? For an answer, he should consult some of our Latin American friends, who at times tell us that their currencies have been devalued by 150 per cent.

But Prof Derrington is a scientist, so why do we not get scientific precision in the use of the English language from him and many of his British colleagues - and indeed from many journalists who report on scientific

matters? The answer is easy: because his American colleagues use that imprecise language. Is this a good enough reason? The square root of minus one may be a nonsense, but it is a very useful, not to say essential, nonsense.

This cannot be said of less or smaller than one time, or 100 per cent, of any number or entity.

John Retic, Braegill, Applethorpe, N Yorks DL5 4TN, UK

Microsoft reveals its mindset with stance on operating systems

From Mr Daniel J. Kennedy.
Sir, By establishing separate interfaces (APIs) to operating system functions for its internal application developers, Microsoft ensures any of its applications can, at its discretion, cost less to

write and have better performance than any equivalent non-Microsoft code. I know of no other operating system vendor that has ever done this.

When Microsoft announced that it would deny support to any

NT user running the Novell director services application it took the position that, if you buy a computer with an MS operating system, it has the right to dictate what code you can run. It reversed this policy when it

became obvious it would be challenged, but it is indicative of Microsoft's mindset.

Daniel J. Kennedy, 3197 Upper Wymewood Place, Herndon VA 20171, US

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The god who fell to earth

The public role of Japan's emperor is changing, says Michio Nakamoto

It was pure Noh - traditional Japanese aristocratic theatre. The Emperor and Empress were seated in the Shakyōnoma, the echoing hall of the Imperial household. The foreign journalists' questions were scripted in advance, the answers memorised beforehand. The Imperial couple sat stiffly, their occasional movements as slow and delicate as the characters in a Noh play. The all-powerful emperor and his consort were mere mouthpieces.

Emperor Akihito is on a tour of Europe. On Monday, he arrives in the UK, knowing full well that spontaneous conversation will be impossible, and that the apology for Japan's second-world-war record demanded by former prisoners is beyond him, because of his narrowly defined role. That role is coming under increasing pressure inside Japan.

The Emperor himself appears keen to present a more human face to Japan and to the world. He has appeared in public holding hands with his wife and recently played rock-paper-scissors during a visit to an old people's home.

But Japanese policy-makers are wary of the Emperor taking any public role that would enhance his political profile. This is because of nervousness about the possibility - however remote - that a strong emperor could become a separate power centre or a symbol around which the military could gather.

In the 1930s, the cult of the emperor - who was viewed as a living god - was adopted by the military authorities as the basis for their power. It was in the emperor's name that they justified their invasion of Manchuria and eventually the attack on Pearl Harbor.

"On the basis of our experience of having gone to the other extreme in the past, the Japanese constitutional monarch is even more divorced from politics and policy than the (British) Queen," explains Sadaki Numata, of the foreign ministry.

There is a second, perhaps more insidious, reason for the remoteness wished upon him by traditionalists. In their minds, distance gives the emperor a certain divinity and hence a claim on ordinary people's devotion. His father, Emperor Showa - known while alive as Hirohito - may have made it clear that he himself was not divine but the myth remains that Akihito was descended from the divine.

"The emperor is a living god - like the Dalai Lama," says Hideaki Kase, a political commentator. "Although the phrase 'living god' has become obsolete there is a sense of him being divine. The emperor is sacred because of his blood ties with the gods that created our nation."

As the chief priest of Shinto - Japan's indigenous mystical and extremely ritualistic religion - the Emperor remains the mediator between man and the gods. In the Shinto "Daijō-

sal" rite, a new emperor is visited by the sun goddess, enters her womb and is reborn as a sacred ruler. Quite how this is supposed to happen is, perhaps understandably, not on the public record.

As recently as 30 years ago, after the emperor had taken a bath in the provinces, the local aristocracy would line up in formal dress to bathe in the same water. Older people thought if they looked at him directly, their eyes would be destroyed by the vision of the gods' direct descendant.

This distance from the public is deliberately maintained, even today. In the early 1990s, a photographer snapped an image of Princess Kiko brushing her husband's hair away from his face. It was a touching and personal gesture, but that did not matter. The photographer was banished from court.

Indeed, some argue the emperor should become yet more remote. "The emperor is a stabiliser, a link with Japanese tradition. He should go back to Kyoto (Japan's ancient capital) and live quietly in seclusion," says Mr Kase who is an outspoken proponent of what might be called the ultra-traditionalists.

Even his current seclusion removes him from most controversy but it raises questions about his relevance to late 20th century Japan. In one nationwide poll conducted in April nearly as many people - 38 per cent - said they had no particular feelings about him as those that said they look favourably on him (40 per cent). And only 30 per cent of Japanese in their twenties approve of the imperial system, says Toshiaki Kawahara, who has written extensively about the imperial family.

The lack of interest is such that Japanese television stations have had to move their programmes on the imperial family to 6am on Sunday. "The truth is," says Mr Kawahara, "that they cannot get the ratings and would rather drop the programmes." They do not do so for fear of an embarrassing backlash from traditionalists.

Like the British monarchy, the Japanese imperial family is trying to satisfy both the demands of the general public and the concerns of the traditionalists. The emperor himself married a commoner he met playing tennis. After the earthquake in 1995 that devastated Kobe, he knelt on the ground to comfort victims. But such gestures remain exceptional events rather than the routine of royalty.

Emperor Akihito's audience with journalists in Tokyo was itself a symbol of this awkwardness. That he held the press conference was an advance, but the ending was as scripted and ceremonial as the answers. And the walk through the echoing corridors of the Imperial Palace and out onto the frantic streets of central Tokyo was a journey between two worlds which remain far apart.

Referendums are often seen as the purest form of democracy. FT writers look at their impact in California and Switzerland, which is about to hold the world's first state poll on genetic engineering

White power by plebiscite

Many political analysts think that more "direct democracy" - meaning many more referendums - could help improve government by making it responsive to the demands of voters. According to a new book, *Paradise Lost: California's Experience, America's Future*, direct democracy has had an entirely different impact in one of the two parts of the world where it has been used most extensively. The author, Peter Schrag, argues that the "orgy" of policy-making referendums that followed Proposition 13 - a popular tax revolt in 1978 - has all but displaced representative government in California.

The background to the development of California's so-called "ballot initiative" is the withdrawal by white family groups into "gated communities" and new towns, which vote to separate themselves administratively from the big cities they used to be part of. In doing this, they have left the poorer inner cities to stew while they spend tax revenues on their new towns.

Though they cannot abscond with political power, they have established

the next best thing - rule by referendum. Proposition 13 and the 40 "ballot initiatives" approved since 1978 have been passed by mainly white voters who still account for 78 per cent of the electorate, though they represent only about 50 per cent of the population.

These referendums have circumscribed the legislature's revenue-raising and spending power. The result is that in the 20 years since Proposition 13 won overwhelming support, California's once-vast infrastructure - its freeways, education and social systems - has crumbled. In approximately the same time, the non-white population of the state has risen from 20 per cent to about half.

Other states that have experienced a similar, if slower, "browning" of their populations, have followed California's plebiscite example with a will.

Mr Schrag does not spend much time speculating over the US's slavish attachment to the notion that California is the bell-wether state of the nation. But he is worried: "Things had better work here, where the new American society is first coming into full view, because if it fails here, it may never

work anywhere else either." Mr Schrag recently retired after almost 20 years editing the editorial page of the Sacramento Bee newspaper. By virtue of that job, he has soaked up every point of view on what may turn out to be one of the more crucial political developments of 20th-century America.

The referendum process was introduced in 1911 to break the stranglehold on the state's affairs of the Southern Pacific Railroad company. Only 43 initiatives

of initiatives have shrunk almost to insignificance. In practice, the dominant role has been taken over by incumbent politicians, from the governor down, and powerful economic interest groups, in pursuit of their own designs.

For example, in his recent budget proposals the governor, Pete Wilson, proposed a 75 per cent cut in car taxes. Even as he was speaking, his allies were warning that, if the state legislature did not approve his plan, they would

seek to have it implemented through a referendum.

At least Mr Schrag detects no ideological dominance by the right or the left of a process that in 1996 ushered in further limitations on taxes, yet also legalised marijuana for medical use and raised the minimum wage.

He accepts that the passing of Proposition 13, which in 1978 capped property taxes and immediately stripped \$700 million from local government budgets, was ulti-

mately a justifiable and probably inevitable result of the state government's ineptitude and paralysis. But he is less sure about the impact of the subsequent proliferation of initiatives on the distribution of political power, and even suggests the distortions may have come about "mostly inadvertently".

Nonetheless, he argues, the effect "was not all that different from what WASP power groups tried to do... divide and shift governmental authority where it would be harder for the elected representatives of new social and ethnic groups to get at it". It recalled, he says, the Boston Yankee tactics of a century ago when they transferred power from the increasingly Irish city council to institutions they still controlled, including the state legislature.

"It goes almost without saying that California represents the first major test of the democratic viability and potential of a major society that is not merely diverse but where white Europeans - the creators and, until now, the possessors of the system - constitute a distinct minority of the population... For better than 20 years, California seems to have been in retreat from

the consequences of that prospect... The state's voters have sought to create a system of government by autopilot.

"In the name of checking corrupt and unresponsive legislators... it is both obviating the need for diligent citizenship and reducing the chances of the new groups, already limited, to exercise real political power any time soon."

Mr Schrag doggedly resists any temptation to veer towards the apocalyptic, but he sees ample scope for serious social rifts. Some signs of economic tensions are already present in a state where the gap between rich and poor is widening faster than in the nation as a whole. He concludes that so long as many "new Californians" are not registered to vote and have little influence on the referendums, the gap between the state's "economic dynamism and its political incompetence will become wider and wider [and] the tension between private affluence and public squalor could reach levels that are neither socially or economically tolerable."

Christopher Parkes

*New Press, \$25

Genetic code of conduct

Swiss people will vote on June 7 in a referendum asking whether they want to "protect life and the environment against genetic manipulation". It is the first time any country has had a chance to vote directly on this most contentious of modern scientific issues.

The vote could have a big impact. If a majority of voters and more than half of the 26 cantons into which the country is divided vote Yes, research projects using transgenic animals will be made illegal, the patenting of plants and animals forbidden, and the deliberate release of genetically modified organisms prevented.

That would be a lot more than just a gesture. Switzerland contains two of the world's most successful pharmaceutical companies, Roche and Novartis. Their new product pipeline depends heavily on genetic research into plants and animals. The vote has set alarm bells ringing in their Basle headquarters.

The debate has also split Switzerland's political establishment, with the socialists, the biggest party, supporting the ban, while Ruth Dreifuss and Moritz Leuenberger, two socialist ministers and most of the trade union oppose it. It is dividing some of Basle's most powerful families. Florianne Koehlin, 50, who

comes from the Geigy pharmaceutical empire, now part of Novartis, is one of the leading campaigners for a ban.

In some ways, Switzerland is a surprising battleground for a debate festering in many European countries. It has always been at the forefront of scientific progress. The country has produced a long line of world-class scientists, ranging from Albert Einstein to Friedrich Miescher, who discovered the existence of DNA. More than 20 Swiss scientists have won Nobel Prizes for research into natural sciences and in Science magazine's 1997 review of citations the Swiss were top in terms of research in areas such as immunology, neurobiology and microbiology.

According to Interpharma, the pharmaceutical industry's trade association, a ban would prevent 2,100 scientists at Swiss universities from continuing their research and could jeopardise 25,000 to 30,000 jobs.

Switzerland's pharmaceutical industry refuses to say how much it is spending to head off the ban, but it seems set to be the most costly referendum in Swiss history. If the Yes campaign wins, it will strengthen the growing disillusion of many business leaders with Switzerland's cumbersome sys-

tem of direct democracy. Fritz Gerber, chairman of Roche, says it could paralyse crucial areas of biomedical research: "The most serious and long-lasting damage would be done to universities. However, the pharmaceutical industry too would be seriously affected, since biotechnology is likely to be involved at some stage or other in research and development of most new medicines."

Unlike the universities, however, industry would have the option of shifting its research and development activities to other countries that carefully nurture rather than hinder modern research.

Fritz Melchers, director of the Roche-financed Basle institute for immunology, says if the referendum is accepted his institute will have to close.

Switzerland is not alone in its concerns about genetic engineering. In Austria, Greenspace activists have mounted "Genetic Hazard Patrols" to disrupt imports of genetically engineered soy oil. The French government is waiting until after a public debate next month to decide whether to approve imports of new strains of genetically modified maize.

In the UK, frozen food chain, Iceland, has begun selling products guaranteed not to contain genetically

modified ingredients, questioning whether its customers want to be "guinea pigs in the largest food experiment of all time".

However, Switzerland is the only country where the population has the right to vote on a highly complex and emotive issue.

Nature magazine ran a recent editorial called: "How not to run a scientifically successful country." It noted that a country's science base could be weakened by lack of investment (UK), institu-



It's in their genes: demonstrators gather in Zurich. Markus Senn

tional sclerosis (France), or political upheaval (Russia). But it concluded: "For a country voluntarily to remove itself from a lively scientific arena in which it is highly successful is a unique phenomenon."

Ms Koehlin sees the issues differently. "There is increasing scepticism everywhere in the world. The more arrogant large concerns become, the more resistance there will be."

William Hall

Buying and selling - the whole picture

To raise turnover Sotheby's and Christie's are increasingly exploiting areas outside auctioneering, says Antony Thomcroft

Above the main auction room at Sotheby's New York HQ in 19th-century style are some luxurious chambers. Hanging on the walls are paintings by Monet, Picasso, Chagall and other popular Impressionist and 20th-century artists. They are all typical works by the artists, familiar images of Normandy landscapes and floating lovers.

These are not works awaiting auction, or unsold jobs. These are paintings that Sotheby's is offering privately for between \$600,000 and \$8m. If you are an unsuccessful bidder at one of Sotheby's glamorous evening auctions, you can pop round the next day and buy a similar painting to the one that got away. After more than 200 years as an auctioneer, Sotheby's is becoming a dealer.

Sotheby's great rival, Christie's, which this week was acquired by François Pinault, the French businessman, is still centred in London's stately St James's. Alongside its main building is Spink, the oldest established antiques dealer in the UK. Today Spink, along with picture dealer Leger, is owned by Christie's.

If you have something to dispose of but want to avoid the glare of the auction room, Christie's can direct you towards its dealing arms. If you want total discretion, it can call on Thomas Gibson, who brings

together willing sellers and keen buyers in anonymous satisfaction.

Thirty years ago fine art auctions were commonplace events in which dealers acquired stock. Then the chairman of Sotheby's, Peter Wilson, took on the dealers, persuading clients to sell their collections at auction rather than through the trade. Today, with collective annual sales approaching \$4bn, Sotheby's and Christie's dominate the market.

But the supply of antiques is finite. Most of the very best Old Master paintings are safely secured in museums; the top Impressionists are quickly going in the same direction. To raise turnover Sotheby's and Christie's must exploit their brand names, market their expertise, and use their knowledge of clients in other areas. Today what happens in the auction room is just half the story.

A dealer is offered an expensive painting, a \$2m Picasso. He knows it is a bargain but he cannot raise the asking price. He can now go to Sotheby's or Christie's and cut them in on the deal. They use their knowledge of collectors to place the painting. If it is slow to shift, it can be auctioned.

A private sale can also do wonders for a work of art that has been publicly touted around the market. In the late 1980s the Japanese discovered tax advantages in owning Impressionist and modern art. They invested

an estimated \$50m in a speculative frenzy, which led to an inevitable and calamitous collapse in 1990. The paintings they acquired are now edging back on to the market. But Sotheby's and Christie's want to control

the flow, much better to sell some privately.

Few of the paintings in Japan are masterpieces. To secure the most desirable collections Sotheby's and Christie's must offer owners a guarantee. Whatever hap-

pens in the saleroom the seller gets the agreed sum.

Last November Christie's took a chance on the Ganz collection, which included one of the finest groups of Picassos to appear at auction. It raised \$206.5m in little over an hour. But the Ganz sale had made little impact on the annual results - the guarantee had been so high, and the marketing programme devised to dazzle the Ganz executors so lavish, that this major event produced only a modest profit.

Last week Sotheby's sold a large painting by Monet of the Grand Canal in Venice for \$12.1m to Paul Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft. The price underlined the strength of the market - in 1990, at the previous peak, it had only made \$8m. But the owners, the Fuji Gallery of Tokyo, had demanded a guarantee of about \$8m. This time the risk paid off.

Sotheby's regards its commitment to "ventures" as a profitable and expanding sideline. As well as guarantees and private dealing, it owns a 20th-century art gallery in New York. It also advances money against works of art sent for sale and against collections. Taken with its real estate business - it is market leader in the US for homes valued above \$1m - the ventures division produced turnover last year of \$45.2m, well above 10 per cent of Sotheby's total turnover. In profit terms (undisclosed) the contribution was higher.

DeDe Brooks, chief executive of Sotheby's, is planning the next expansions. In five years, she envisages a much greater contribution from publishing, education and travel, all exploiting the Sotheby's name and expertise. The first digital auction, with bidders maintaining contact through computer screens, will be held this year, for books, and seems set to reach a new audience. She is also committed to following her great rival into the world of branded jewellery: Christie's has just set up an operation in this field using the Spink name.

The Christie's board sold out to Mr Pinault because he is rich enough to underwrite the company if anything goes wrong with a major guarantee. But although he is an avid collector of modern art he also collects brand names, and Christie's sits well alongside Chateau Latour and the Vail ski resort. He knows there is little profit in auctions. Christie's overtook Sotheby's in size last year for the first time in 40 years but its profits remain lower, at little over 3 per cent of turnover.

Mr Pinault will seek to raise this, and the obvious way is by brand exploitation. If he is wise, he will move cautiously. More than 20 years ago Peter Wilson raised £100,000 (\$167,000) by selling the Sotheby's name to Wills to be used for a brand of cigarettes. It split his board, lost staff, and the cigarette was a flop.

Going, going... auctioneers are losing importance. Brendan Carr

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Over-supply holds oil prices back

WEEK IN THE MARKETS

By Gary Mead

The oil markets remained becalmed yesterday, with the price of Brent blend on the International Petroleum Exchange remaining tightly range-bound in the context of global over-supply.

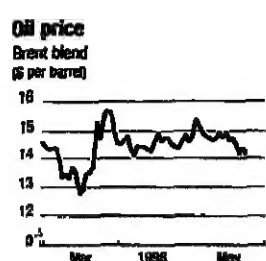
In later trading, Brent for July delivery was 8 cents down, at \$13.90 a barrel, having struggled to a peak of \$14.10 earlier on news of strike activity by Colombia's oil workers; later reports said the strike had ended.

Activity in soft commodity futures on the London Financial Futures Exchange was equally subdued, as traders settled into the start of a long weekend; Monday is a public holiday in the UK and the US.

Cocoa futures closed marginally higher, the July contract ending at \$1,146 a tonne, \$10 higher, having dropped \$16 at one point in the day. But investment fund interest emerged strongly towards the end, helping the contract recover the lost ground.

The robust coffee contract for July slumped to \$1,815 a tonne, \$57 lower than the previous close, though it later picked up in the morning session to reach \$1,840 a tonne by lunchtime. At the close of afternoon business, the July contract had regained all its losses to close unchanged at \$1,872.

The International Coffee Organisation published its latest global production estimates for 1997-98; it revised



Oil price
Brent blend
(\$ per barrel)

Source: Commodity Week

LME warehouse stocks	
Tonnes (000)	Change
Aluminium	52.1
Aluminium alloy	52.1
Copper	288.3
Lead	108.4
Nickel	85.1
Zinc	445.0
Steel	0.8

* Thursday's close

downwards its projections, from 97.1m 60-kg bags to 91.3m bags. Exportable production will drop to 67.4m bags, from earlier estimates of 77.1m bags.

Production is expected to have been lower in Colombia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and Uganda, with the greatest decline in Brazil, with 18.8m bags against 27.6m in 1996-97.

However, Brazilian production in 1998-99 may be as high as 31.2m bags, said the ICO; other analysts put the likely Brazilian crop even higher.

On the London Metal Exchange most metals ended the week either unchanged or little changed in quiet trading, with only three-months lead - up \$10, to \$573 a tonne - and tin - up \$20, to \$5,890 a tonne, showing much action.

WEEKLY PRICE CHANGES

Holiday mood grips

GOVERNMENT BONDS

By Simon Davies in London
and John Labate in New York

Government bond markets were mixed in quiet trading yesterday, as the Anglo-Saxon markets prepared for

data, with the June contract settling 0.16 higher at 108.54. The weakening of sterling attracted some foreign buying, as did the growing conviction that interest rates have peaked. The yield spread against German Bunds narrowed by 3 basis

Source: International Commodity Exchange

GOVERNMENT BONDS

By Simon Davies in London

and John Labate in New York

Government bond markets were mixed in quiet trading yesterday, as the Anglo-American markets prepared for a short holiday.

UK GILTS were unchanged in the first-quarter GDP

data, with the June contract settling at 108.54. The weakening of sterling attracted some foreign buying, as did the growing conviction that interest rates have peaked. The yield spread against German Bunds narrowed by 3 basis points to 98.

BUNDS traded within a range of just 0.22 yesterday, with turnover in London at just over 51,000 contracts. The June contract settled

0.02 down on its Thursday close in London at 107.41.

US TREASURIES were firmer by early afternoon, as the market closed early ahead of the three-day holiday weekend. The price of the benchmark 30-year bond had gained by 1/8%, sending the yield lower to 5.90 percent.

Shorter-term issues did less well. The 10-year note rose 1/8%, yielding 5.63 percent, while the two-year

note was unchanged at 100, yielding 5.62 percent.

"The flattening of the yield curve is the main thing today," said Ken Fan of Paribas Capital Markets.

The yield spread between the long bond and the two-year note had fallen to just below 28 basis points. Earlier in the week, it had broken through the bottom end of its recent range. No significant economic reports were issued yesterday.

US INTEREST RATES

Instrument	Rate
1-month	5.50
3-month	5.50
6-month	5.50
1-year	5.50
2-year	5.63
3-year	5.63
5-year	5.90
10-year	5.63
30-year	5.90

BOND FUTURES AND OPTIONS

Source: International Commodity Exchange

Source: International Commodity Exchange

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UK GILTS PRICES

Instrument	Price
1-month	108.54
3-month	108.54
6-month	108.54
1-year	108.54
2-year	107.41
3-year	107.41
5-year	108.54
10-year	108.54
30-year	108.54

UK GILTS PRICES

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CURRENCIES & MONEY

Market wary

By Richard Adams

International foreign exchange markets traded cautiously yesterday, wary of intervention by the Bank of Japan to prop up the yen ahead of a holiday weekend. With the markets in New York and London closed Monday, traders were concerned that the Japanese central bank might take advantage of weak volumes to intervene and drive up the yen.

Intervention by the central bank is seen as unlikely, although it did use a similar opportunity last month to sell the dollar.

Activity yesterday morning saw the yen falling against the US dollar, in reaction to the minutes of the Bank of Japan's April minutes that hinted at an interest rate cut.

Various rumours entertained the European market that the Bank was checking

prices, that the US Federal Reserve or the Reserve Bank of Australia had sold US Treasury bills on its behalf - but none proved reliable.

Sterling spent the morning recovering from weakness on Thursday, when it hit its lowest point against the D-Mark for six months. Economic data showing a widening trade deficit failed to weaken the pound, which was aided by investors selling yen for sterling. It ended

trading hours in London only slightly stronger, at DM1.66. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose marginally higher by 0.1, to 102.5.

The Norwegian kroner was stronger as a result of the Norges Bank's decision to increase interest rates by

50 basis points to support the currency, which has weakened recently against the Euro and the D-Mark. The D-Mark the kroner recently dropped to its lowest levels for 11 months.

Kjell Stork, the central bank governor, said: "Monetary policy is exclusively to stabilise the crown against European currencies."

Taiwan's central bank introduced a range of measures to restrict forward selling of the Taiwan dollar, in a bid to ward off speculation. Meanwhile, the Indonesian rupiah has not yet managed to bounce from the resignation of President Suharto, as analysts await further events.

Japanese investors were highlighted as the likely yen sellers yesterday, with talk in the market that institutions have as much as ¥650bn to sell by the end of the month.

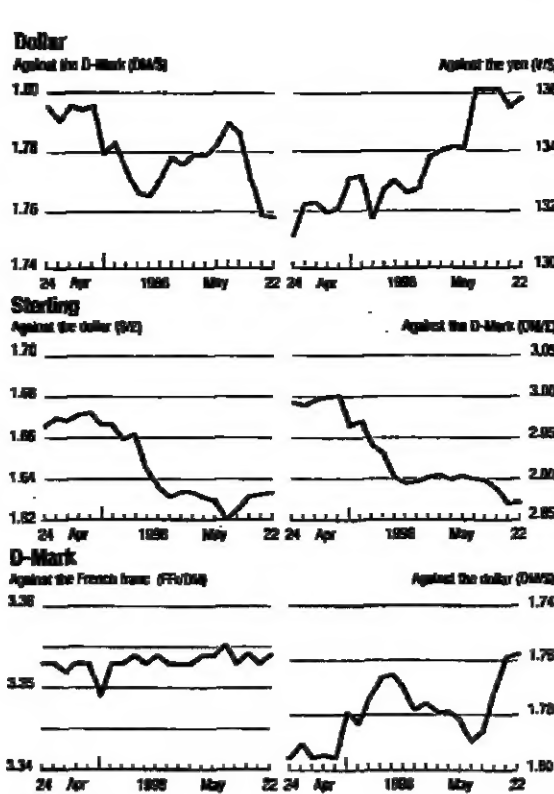
Maure Chandler, Deutsche's currency analyst in New York, said that institutional sellers were persistent buyers of dollars, D-Marks and sterling. "Some short-term speculative forces have

apparently bought D-Mark/yen as a safer way to be short the yen in case of intervention," he said, warning that when the Bank intervened last month, the dollar fell 5 per cent against the yen and the D-Mark by four per cent.

Taiwan's central bank introduced new controls on the island from using joint accounts to conduct foreign exchange swap trades, and ban Taiwan citizens from using non-deliverable forward contracts and swaps.

The move comes a month after the central bank told banks to disclose all non-deliverable forward trades daily, and report all deals over \$5m.

Bankers on the island estimate the controls will indirectly reduce foreign forward trade activity. The central bank consulted foreign bankers over the dollar.



WORLD INTEREST RATES

MONEY RATES

May 22	Overnight	One month	Three months	Six months	One year	Long term	Repo rate
Belgium	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	6.00	2.75
France	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4.50	3.30
Germany	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4.50	2.50
Italy	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	6.00	6.00
Netherlands	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4.50	3.30
Spain	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4.50	3.30
Sweden	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4.50	3.30
Switzerland	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4.50	3.30
UK	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4.50	3.30
US	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4.50	3.30

EURO CURRENCY INTEREST RATES

May 22	Overnight	One month	Three months	Six months	One year
Belgium Franc	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
French Franc	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
German Mark	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Italian Lira	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Spanish Peseta	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Portuguese Escudo	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Swedish Krona	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Swiss Franc	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
UK Pound	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
US Dollar	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%

THREE MONTH EURO CURRENCY FUTURES (LFF) 10000 points of 100%

May 22	Open	Sett. price	Change	High	Low	Est. vol	Open int.
Jun	95.130	95.130	-0.005	95.140	95.120	12896	340388
Sep	95.215	95.215	-0.010	95.225	95.195	2734	388158
Dec	95.375	95.375	-0.015	95.390	95.350	2472	436888
Mar	95.535	95.535	-0.020	95.550	95.515	1338	377422

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May 22	Open	Sett. price	Change	High	Low	Est. vol	Open int.
Jun	95.130	95.130	-0.005	95.140	95.120	12896	340388
Sep	95.215	95.215	-0.010	95.225	95.195	2734	388158
Dec	95.375	95.375	-0.015	95.390	95.350	2472	436888
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May 22	Open	Sett. price	Change	High	Low	Est. vol	Open int.
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WINNERS AND LOSERS

THE FIVE BEST INVESTORS

Buy US Small Companies	10,732
Buy Small US Stocks	9,941
Buy Foreign Stocks	8,888
Buy US Stocks	7,722
Buy International Stocks	7,605

BOTTOM FIVE INVESTORS

Buy US Bonds	4,004
Buy International Bonds	3,985
Buy US Commodities	3,905
Buy International Commodities	3,875
Buy US Futures	3,875

Rising Interest Rates

Line graph showing performance from 1980 to 1990. The Y-axis represents performance index from 0 to 10,000. The X-axis represents years from 1980 to 1990. The graph shows a general upward trend with significant volatility, particularly a sharp peak around 1983 followed by a crash and subsequent recovery.

Table 1 shows the results of Equation (2) over different time periods. Results are ranked on 3-year performance. Worker and performance is not a substitute for future performance.

■ Best Peps			
	1999	2000	2001
Best Overall	1999	2000	2001
Best 2000	1999	2000	2001
Best 2001	1999	2000	2001
Best 2002	1999	2000	2001
Best 2003	1999	2000	2001
Best 2004	1999	2000	2001
Best 2005	1999	2000	2001
Best 2006	1999	2000	2001
Best 2007	1999	2000	2001
Best 2008	1999	2000	2001
Best 2009	1999	2000	2001
Best 2010	1999	2000	2001
Best 2011	1999	2000	2001
Best 2012	1999	2000	2001
Best 2013	1999	2000	2001
Best 2014	1999	2000	2001
Best 2015	1999	2000	2001
Best 2016	1999	2000	2001
Best 2017	1999	2000	2001
Best 2018	1999	2000	2001
Best 2019	1999	2000	2001
Best 2020	1999	2000	2001
Best 2021	1999	2000	2001
Best 2022	1999	2000	2001
Best 2023	1999	2000	2001
Best 2024	1999	2000	2001
Best 2025	1999	2000	2001
Best 2026	1999	2000	2001
Best 2027	1999	2000	2001
Best 2028	1999	2000	2001
Best 2029	1999	2000	2001
Best 2030	1999	2000	2001
Best 2031	1999	2000	2001
Best 2032	1999	2000	2001
Best 2033	1999	2000	2001
Best 2034	1999	2000	2001
Best 2035	1999	2000	2001
Best 2036	1999	2000	2001
Best 2037	1999	2000	2001
Best 2038	1999	2000	2001
Best 2039	1999	2000	2001
Best 2040	1999	2000	2001
Best 2041	1999	2000	2001
Best 2042	1999	2000	2001
Best 2043	1999	2000	2001
Best 2044	1999	2000	2001
Best 2045	1999	2000	2001
Best 2046	1999	2000	2001
Best 2047	1999	2000	2001
Best 2048	1999	2000	2001
Best 2049	1999	2000	2001
Best 2050	1999	2000	2001
Best 2051	1999	2000	2001
Best 2052	1999	2000	2001
Best 2053	1999	2000	2001
Best 2054	1999	2000	2001
Best 2055	1999	2000	2001
Best 2056	1999	2000	2001
Best 2057	1999	2000	2001
Best 2058	1999	2000	2001
Best 2059	1999	2000	2001
Best 2060	1999	2000	2001
Best 2061	1999	2000	2001
Best 2062	1999	2000	2001
Best 2063	1999	2000	2001
Best 2064	1999	2000	2001
Best 2065	1999	2000	2001
Best 2066	1999	2000	2001
Best 2067	1999	2000	2001
Best 2068	1999	2000	2001
Best 2069	1999	2000	2001
Best 2070	1999	2000	2001
Best 2071	1999	2000	2001
Best 2072	1999	2000	2001
Best 2073	1999	2000	2001
Best 2074	1999	2000	2001
Best 2075	1999	2000	2001
Best 2076	1999	2000	2001
Best 2077	1999	2000	2001
Best 2078	1999	2000	2001
Best 2079	1999	2000	2001
Best 2080	1999	2000	2001

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Property					
Aberdeen Public Property Str	1203	1730	1989	-	-
Norwich Property	1163	1344	1076	-	-
Always Residential Property	1062	1222	-	-	-
Barclays Property	1017	1192	1413	-	-
SECTOR AVERAGE	1096	1374	1664	-	-

■ North America				
1.9	GA North America Growth	1387	2516	3643 8839
2.6	Drexler NCM America Ssn Co	1347	2328	2544 4653
2.2	Royal & SunAI Nth America	1352	2220	3131 6901
2.8	Handerson American Small Cos	1361	2208	2781 7051
2.0	Edgington North American	1280	2183	2590 7258
2.2	SECTOR AVERAGE	1271	1867	2216 5219

Commodity & Energy				
M&E Australian Acc	829	1295	1570	2190
S&W & Foreign Commodity	743	894	1080	1831
M&E Commodity	655	572	1100	1679
HM Special Natural Resources	745	848	984	1507
TSS Natural Resources	723	816	1088	2373
SECTOR AVERAGE	677	807	1020	1765

Investment Trust Units				
Quilter Investment Trusts Inc.	1180	1887	2283	-
Quilter High Inc Inv Trd Acc	1228	1648	2234	-
Ember Fund of Investment Trst	1180	1558	2188	3548
Singer & Friedlander Inv Trd Pp	1778	1548	-	-
Equitable Trust of Invest Trst	1447	1512	1873	3812
SECTOR AVERAGE	1195	1401	1893	3445

Fund of Funds					
1.4	Royal & Savill Portfolio	1184	1657	2023	3124
1.7	TSB Selector	1206	1637	1671	
-	WHECO Managed Acc	1184	1628	1678	
1.2	Fidelity Moneybuilder Plus	2183	7619	1888	3489
1.1	Lloyds Bank Growth Portfolio	1178	1608	1680	
1.0	SCPIA ASSET	1192	1423	1992	2982

WINNERS AND LOSERS

TOP FIVE OVER 10 YEARS

Comcast	\$2,800	\$500
Amazon & Net Entertainment	75,000	10,000
Netflix, Pinterest	6,000	1,000
Google, Microsoft	2,000	500,000
Facebook, Amazon	1,700	1,000

BOTTOM FIVE OVER 10 YEARS

Marine Corps Post	200	100
United States Postal Service	1,000	100
Johnson & Johnson	7,000	100
United Property Stores	2,000	100
Wal-Mart Stores	2,000	100

Source: Bloomberg

75,000
50,000
25,000
0

1,000
500
250
100
0

1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009

Tables show the result of investing £1,000 over different time periods. Totals are ranked as 3-year performance. Weighted and unweighted for vol. = ranks for 3-year performance. For investment total return see table above.

	1990	'91	'92	Diff/90	Vol
High Income					
Dartmoor	1571	2226	3306	-13	4
Aberdeen High Income	1982	2181	-	2	5
Shires Income	1674	1990	2366	5	4
Gairmnoe Scotland (Hols)	1422	1917	2335	-	3
Glasgow Income	1430	1791	2185	8	4
SECTOR AVERAGE	1460	1818	2265	-	-

Split - Capital						
Scottish National Cap	4037	12111	9863	-17	174	
Frankington Dual Cap	4783	6289		-29	123	
Jove Cap	6000	5793	6482	27	203	
Emmor Dual Cap	7481	5298	5676	32	182	
Gartmore Scotland Cap	2188	3413	4651	31	84	
SECTOR AVERAGE	2327	3353	3697	31	7.7	

Split - Inc & Residual Cap Shares					
TR Technology B	1200	3853	5386	-	8.7
Johnson Fry UNITEs	2489	3038	-	17	0.7
City of Oxford	2489	3015	4527	8	8.2
Hendriksen EuroTrust	1763	2907	3195	10	8.2
Johnson Fry European UNITEs	2101	2750	-	22	6.5
SECTOR AVERAGE	2047	2929	2984	-	8.2

■ Split - Income					
Nights & houses Inc	1981	2265	3884	-	5.7
Envor: Dual Inc	1728	1795	1981	-	10.1
Jove Inc	1327	1892	1679	-	3.4
Freemington Dual Inc	1472	1641	-	-	5.6
Jupiter General Inc	1281	1510	1638	-	3.4
SECTOR AVERAGE	1249	1493	1884	-	2.7

Split - Zero Dividend					
Cartoonists Shared Eq Junior Zero	1106	1481	-	-	2.10
Cartoonists Brk Inc & Gift Zero	1101	1457	-	-	2.10
Johnson Fry Utility Zr Div Pfr	1141	1432	-	-	2.30
Eastcoast Dowd Zero Coupon Pfr	1177	1422	1956	-	3.00
Johnson Fry Europe Units Zero	1088	1391	-	-	2.10
SECTOR AVERAGE	1088	1319	1649	-	2.40

that best results allow for the spread between buying and selling prices and account for income investment trust results are calculated on mid-market prices with net income reinvested. Weekly standard deviation of monthly price movements for each fund over the past 3 years. A fund's standard deviation describes the way those movements are dispersed around its average and is a common measure of how standard deviations measure the monthly spread for a given trust over their entire existence and has relatively low. A high figure represents a poor volatile performance. Yields are shown. Readings

■ UNIT TRUST LAUNCHES

[illegible]

Jupiter (0500 050098) UK fixed interest 7 Yes Yes 4 1+ No 500 4 1+ No 500 No 6/5/96-28/5/98
Jupiter's first venture into corporate bond Peps has around 15 per cent of its investment overseas. It is nice to see a fund exchanging preference shares for
sharehold from income.

■ Premier UK Smaller Companies Fund
Premier Portfolio (0800 212577) UK smaller cos \$ No% No 5.5 1.5 No 1,000 7/28/16/98
The fund has outsourced managers: Peter Webb, manager of English Investment Trust, and John McCune. It invests in companies from \$2m-245m.

Quilter & Co, the private client stockbroker owned by Commercial Union, is moving into the mass market with a unit trust based on a model growth portfolio. The trust, which launches in July, will use the FTSE/Aepins international growth index as its benchmark, with 63 per cent of investments in UK equities and about 10 per cent in cash and bonds.

Minimum investment is £5,000, or £100 a month, but Quilter says it provides a tax-efficient alternative to a managed portfolio for large investors.

It follows the launch by Cazenove of a trust-based portfolio service with a £200,000 minimum, designed to help well-off clients take advantage of lower long-term capital gains tax rates.

The new launch is the start of a push by Quilter to raise money from the ordinary investor, rather than the high net worth individuals targeted by the portfolio management arm, which only takes investments of £100,000 or more.

Neil Jolowicz, divisional director of Quilter, said: "This fund gives the smaller investor access to a low risk diversified portfolio." Since the fund

invests globally and makes asset allocation decisions, "this is a neat solution - you will not have to buy and sell your own portfolio of overseas trusts to get global exposure right".

The trust has a launch discount, but the 5 per cent initial charge will make the trust unattractive as an alternative for those who can afford private portfolio management.

There is no personal equity plan but the trust can be put in a self-select PEP, which Quilter also sells.

James Mackintosh

OFEX FACIL

EASDAO

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● **ET Clothing Unit** That Prices are available over the telephone. Call the ET Clothing Help Desk at (644) 371-8233/8232 for more details.

[illegible]

Insurances, Money Markets and Other

● FT Cityline Unit Trust Prices are available over the telephone. Call the FT Cityline Help Desk on 1-866-373-8224/8228 for more details.

[illegible]

FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

Offshore Funds and Insurances

FT Cityline Unit Trust Prices are available over the telephone. Call the FT Cityline Help Desk on (3-44 171) 895 4378 for more details.

[illegible]

Offshore Insurances and Other Funds

Offshore Insurances and Other Funds

**Birmingham
welcomes 700,000
visitors to the
International
Motor Show.**

(Now, there's a city that's
really motoring.)

the nec
birmingham

Birmingham

[illegible]

هذه ايامنا الاولى

Dow weaker in run-up to holiday

AMERICAS
Wall Street moved lower in thin trading as investors prepared for the three-day holiday weekend, writes John Labate in New York.

"The market's definitely a little weak, but it doesn't seem to be traumatic," said Warren Epstein, director of trading at Richard Rosenblatt & Co. He added: "The most startling thing over the last few weeks has been how poor the breadth has been."

By midday declining stocks topped advancing ones by a margin of about 1 to 1 on the New York Stock Exchange with the Dow Jones Industrial Average off 33.38 to 9,096.59. The broader Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 4.27 to 1,110.37.

The heaviest losses were in the technology and small-company sectors. The Nasdaq composite index lost 14.82 or 0.8 per cent to 1,806.37, while the Russell 2000 was down 4.26 to 482.93.

Among Dow component shares, cyclical stocks continued to meet with selling. Caterpillar fell 3/4 to \$58.40. Transport stocks were mixed. AMR, parent of American Airlines, climbed 1/4 to \$147.47 after US regulators threatened to reject its alliance with British Airways. BA's ADS shares were down 3/4 to \$105.50.

Southwest Airlines rose 3/4 to \$26.00 one day after the company revealed plans to increase capacity. Best Buy, the consumer electronics retailer, plunged 3/4 or more than 1 per cent to \$63.00 on worries about personal computer sales.

In the health sector Med-Partners fell 3/4 to \$8.00 after it said it had acquired a physician group.

Pfizer fell 1/4 to \$105 on news that six men taking its impotence drug Viagra had died.

TORONTO opened modestly higher, but the advance had run out of steam by late morning in thin trade as the market lost momentum. By midsession, the 300 composite index was 10.78 easier at 7,077.50 in volume of 26m shares.

Seagram posted a C\$2.25 rise to C\$96.35 as the market revealed the group after its \$10.6m deal to buy PolyGram.

Mittel rose 95 cents to C\$23.65, off an intraday 52-week high of C\$24.10 in response to Thursday's results announcement.

SÃO PAULO added to Thursday's losses in early trading with the Bovespa index slipping a further 187 or 1.6 per cent to 10,102 at midsession.

Brokers said volumes were thin with investors unwilling to open fresh positions ahead of the three-day weekend in the US. Telebras slid 1.3 per cent to R\$126.30 and Petrobras lost 2.1 per cent to R\$230.

MEXICO CITY traded quietly in low turnover. Telcel pared initial gains, dipping 15 centavos to 21.45 pesos and at midsession the IPC index was off 0.22 at 4,680.22.

SANTIAGO eased lower with the long weekend for Wall Street said to be weighing on sentiment. At midsession, the IPSA index was off 0.89 or 1 per cent at 52.63.

EUROPE

Renewed speculation about mergers in the banking sector enabled FRANKFURT to extend its latest expedition into record territory. The Xetra Dax index put on 15.58 to 5,580.19.

Deutsche Bank stepped into the spotlight on speculation that a merger with Chase Manhattan Bank was on the agenda. Both banks declined to comment on the rumours as Deutsche Bank climbed to an intraday record high of DM164.65.

Subsequently, as some analysts poured cold water on the likelihood of a link, shares in the German bank pulled back but still settled 65 pips higher on the day at DM160.50.

Elsewhere in the financial sector, Commerzbank climbed 87 pips to DM70.77 and Dresdner Bank was flat at DM102.

The engineering sector was also in demand. Siemens climbed DM4.05 to DM121.58 on optimism that its ATD industrial projects and tech-

Bank merger speculation puts Dax in credit

nical services business would present impressive results on Monday. Mannesmann was marked DM45 higher at DM156.5.

PARIS notched up another record high on the CAC 40 index, which ended 1.86 better at 4,049.78.

The buyers got behind motor stocks, sending Renault up FF16.40 to FF315.20 and Peugeot FF24.00 better at FF11.60. Brokers said the sector was mostly catching up with a bounce for US auto shares after a period of relative share price weakness.

L'Oreal was also a firm mover, adding FF157 to FF37,000 on the improving trading climate across Asia for luxury goods suppliers. Alcatel Alsthom hardened FF5 to FF1.285 after positive broker comment, notably from Société Générale, which reiterated buy advice.

Persistent talk of a flotation for Sprint PCS, the US telecoms group in which France Telecom has a 30 per cent stake, sent the latter up FF7 to FF332 for a four-day

ASIA PACIFIC

The swift and peaceful departure from office of President Suharto was marked by a sharp rise in JAKARTA shares, but analysts said there was little reaction to the composition of Indonesia's new cabinet.

The composite index was 3.8 per cent higher by midsession and it extended the gain to late trade to close 21.13 or 5 per cent higher at 446.14.

Analysts said the market gave a muted response to the new cabinet since it looked much like the last one. Investors, however, showed enthusiasm that Giandjar Kariassmita had retained his key post as economics co-ordinating minister.

Shares linked to the Suharto family gave back some of the gains seen earlier in the week. Bimantara Citra, a conglomerate controlled by the former president's son, lost Rp25 to Rp376, while Citra Marga, a toll road operator controlled by Suharto's daughter, lost Rp25 to Rp400.

Sega, the game manufacturer, announced it had fallen in losses on sharply lower sales and rose Y310 to Y2,700. On Thursday, the company announced an alliance with Microsoft, NEC and Yamaha to manufacture a 128-bit games console to compete with Sony's PlayStation and the Nintendo 64 platform.

The big banks announced their results, mostly after the market had closed. All but one revealed losses. Fuji Bank fell Y8 to Y21 and Sanwa Y37 to Y1,200, while Dai-ichi Kangyo was up at Y78 and Aseki Bank was stable at Y564.

Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi, which unveiled the second largest loss by a Japanese quoted company, rose Y18 to Y1,541.

Mitsubishi Motor closed down 6 per cent or Y23 at Y565. The company is scheduled to announce full-year results next week. Fuji Car Manufacturing dropped 8 per cent or Y15 to Y165.

In Osaka, the OSE index closed down 70 points at 16,541.

SEOUL continued to move

PolyGram rose F13 to F112.40

on the news that the music specialist had finally agreed to be taken over by Canadian drinks and entertainment group, Seagram.

Philips, which is PolyGram's controlling shareholder with a 75 per cent stake, came off F16.50 at F119.30, largely on the understanding that the electronics giant could end up with \$2bn worth of Seagram shares under the disposal.

Heineken jumped F1.40 to F177.60 on the improved trading climate in Indonesia, where the brewer has large production plants. The shares have risen almost 5 per cent this week.

Vendex rose F17.90 to F134.50 after Morgan Stanley upgraded the retailer from "strong buy" to "overweight".

UBTCH traded higher, fuelled by sharp rises in Nestlé and Holderbank, with both stocks profiting from modest demand but virtually no supply. The SMI index closed 46.9 higher at 7,542.7.

Holderbank, the cement

and construction group, rose SFr67 through some technical resistance to SFr1,897 as Morgan Stanley issued an upgrade on the stock to a "strong buy".

Nestlé was marked SFr65 higher at SFr3,132 as the food group declined to comment on market rumours that it was a prospective suitor for Thorn Apple Valley.

The US meat processing company said last month it had retained investment bankers to help it explore alternatives for maximising shareholder value, including a sale of the company.

Clariant outperformed, gaining SFr76 to SFr1,950

with buying triggered by speculation that the company would spin off its textile dye business. Ciba Specialty Chemicals ended SFr475 higher at SFr2,047.5.

Watchmaker, SMI H extended recent gains, rising SFr39 to SFr1,294, while SAIRGroup closed at a high for the year, up SFr12 at SFr450, helped by news that the company will announce a co-operation agreement with a Japanese airline in the next few months. More than 50 per cent of the airline's earnings in Asia comes from Japan.

Written and edited by Michael Morgan, Jeffrey Brown and Paul Grehan

FTSE Actuaries Share Indices

Percentage change in share price since the start of the year

Index	Value	% Chg	Vol	% Chg	Vol	% Chg	Vol
FTSE 100	1231.78	+0.41	5,033	1.93	12,544	12,544	12,544
FTSE 250	2821.78	+0.36	10,077	2.00	11,118	10,074	10,074
FTSE 1000	1024.19	+0.22	2,271	1.60	5,461	10,079	10,079

FTSE 100 Share Indices

Percentage change in share price since the start of the year

Index	Value	% Chg	Vol	% Chg	Vol	% Chg	Vol
FTSE 100	1231.78	+0.41	5,033	1.93	12,544	12,544	12,544
FTSE 250	2821.78	+0.36	10,077	2.00	11,118	10,074	10,074
FTSE 1000	1024.19	+0.22	2,271	1.60	5,461	10,079	10,079

FTSE 100 Share Indices

Percentage change in share price since the start of the year

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PRINTERS
FAX MACHINES

COMPANIES IN MARKETS

Weekend May 23/May 24 1998

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Springer considers bid for Mirror Group

German newspaper publisher eyes UK opportunity

By Cathy Newman and
Graham Bowley in Frankfurt

Axel Springer Verlag, Germany's biggest newspaper publisher, said yesterday it was considering making a bid for Mirror Group, the UK tabloid newspaper owner.

In a hurriedly prepared statement published after the London Stock Exchange closed, Springer, which owns Germany's biggest tabloid newspaper, Bild, confirmed it was considering a number of "opportunities", including an offer for Mirror.

That contradicted comments from Springer yesterday morning denying that it had any interest in the group.

Mirror Group appeared to have been caught on the hop by the news.

Kelvin MacKenzie, Mirror Group deputy chief executive, yesterday said the company was more likely to be bought by Jerry Springer, the American TV host, than Axel Springer.

Mirror denied it had had any

talks with Springer. However, David Montgomery, chief executive, met Gus Fischer, for lunch a few weeks ago. Mr Fischer used to be chief executive of News International, owner of the Sun and the News of the World newspapers.

In an interview earlier this month, Mr Fischer expressed an interest in British newspapers and said Springer had had its eye on the Express group, owned by United News & Media.

Analysts speculated that an offer might be priced at up to 260p a share, which would value Mirror's equity at £1.2bn (£2bn).

The shares closed yesterday up 6.5p to 210p as rumours of a bid circulated.

Mirror, which owns regional newspapers and a cable television station as well as national titles, has been seen as vulnerable to takeover approaches. Doubts about its strategy and management strength have not abated since the group

expanded into regional newspapers last year. Declining circulation in the tabloid national newspaper market have also caused concern.

Springer, one of Germany's few publicly quoted media groups, is expanding but has been unsettled recently by the change of top management.

Mr Fischer was brought in to replace Jürgen Richter, who had launched new titles, slimmed management and increased profitability. Mr Richter was ousted after he lost the confidence of Friede Springer, the group's main shareholder and widow of its founder.

Kirch Group, the German media company, is Springer's second biggest shareholder with 40 per cent.

Springer, which also owns Die Welt, the newspaper, stepped up its international expansion with the acquisition yesterday of a Spanish magazine group specialising in IT publications.

See Law

Sega pins return to profit on new game

By Graham Norton in Tokyo

Sega, the electronic games maker, fell into the red as expected last year, but claimed yesterday that the launch of its next-generation game console would carry it back into profit this year.

The declining popularity of Sega's 32-bit Saturn games console, which has lost out to Sony's PlayStation and Nintendo's 64-bit machine, pushed the company into a consolidated net loss of ¥35.6bn (£285m) for the year ended last March 31, in line with an earlier forecast.

But Sega has plans to fight back with a 128-bit game machine, the Dreamcast, to be launched in November. Dreamcast has been created jointly with Microsoft, the US computer software company, and will have more sophisticated graphics and sound than its competitors.

Shoichiro Irimajiri, Sega president, yesterday predicted sales of 1m Dreamcast consoles in Japan from the launch to the end of the financial year on March 31 1999. This would bring the company back to a ¥5bn consolidated net profit next year, he said.

The group figures will continue to be affected by poor performance in the US, where Sega lost ¥42.7bn in the year just ended.

Dreamcast will not go on sale outside Japan until next year.

Sega foresees group sales of ¥235bn for the current year, down 3 per cent. The full impact of the new console will not be felt through until the 1999-2000 financial year.

Reizler Dohelman, technology analyst at SBC Warburg in Tokyo, said Sega had a 60-60 chance of achieving its aim sales target. "It is really a function of the pricing. If they can get the price under ¥30,000, and not lose money, they can easily sell 1m units in the first year."

But he added that it could be difficult to keep the price of such a technically advanced machine below ¥30,000. Sega has indicated that the price is likely to be between ¥20,000 and ¥30,000.

See Law

THE LEX COLUMN

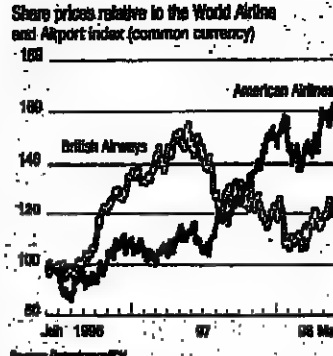
Springing a surprise

Germany is certainly taking to the capital markets with gusto. Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, Chrysler, Random House - and soon, conceivably, the UK's Mirror Group too - are succumbing to acquisitive German corporates. Poverty of ambition is certainly a label more appropriate to UK chief executives than their German counterparts.

So far as one can tell from Springer's conflicting statements yesterday, Germany's biggest newspaper publisher is more than running the slide rule over Mirror Group. In some ways, this is hardly surprising. The UK publisher of tabloid national and regional newspapers has not performed terribly well recently: its shares have lagged the market by 26 per cent since 1997 and trade at a significant discount to other media stocks. Doubts about the group's growth prospects, despite the acquisition of Midland Independent Newspapers, remain strong owing to circulation decline and price competition. So the acquisitive Springer team, constrained in Germany by Bild's and Die Welt's high market share, might snap it up reasonably cheaply.

Politically, the left-leaning Mirror might sit uneasily with the right-wing Bild. Certainly, it would heighten concerns about Britain losing control of its corporate icons. But since it would not be the first UK newspaper group to fall into foreign hands, a bid with a fat premium would be hard to resist. The best chance would be to find a white knight.

American Airlines/British Airways
Share prices relative to the World Airline and Airport Index (common currency)



hit Dreamcast machine - which will run a version of Microsoft's Windows CE operating system - it risks scuppering the sales prospects of its existing offering until the new ones hit the shelves in Japan in November this year and elsewhere perhaps not until mid-1999.

Unlike Microsoft, Sega lacks the monopolist's power to scare off rival product development with just the merest hint of its own upgrades (which may or may not ever materialise). Since Sony's PlayStation has come from nowhere to take 60 per cent of the games market, the Dreamcast will have its work cut out to catapult Sega into a market-leading position. If priced in the key ¥20,000-¥30,000 range, it could steal a march for a year or so. But the technological leapfrogging is unlikely to end.

BA/American Airlines

The trustbusters at the US Justice department should be putting in for overtime. Within days of declaring war on Microsoft, they have turned their fire on the BA/AA alliance. Their recommendation to the transportation department is full of sound and fury, but will signify far less than their tirades against Microsoft. For one thing, it is the transportation officials who have the power to approve international airline alliances. Second, the Justice department's demands look quite close to those expected from the European Commission. If BA/AA agree a deal with Brussels, it is unlikely to be scuppered in the US.

At stake is the number of weekly slots at Heathrow airport, London, that the alliance will have to give up to rival airlines. The Justice department picked 396 as its magic number. BA hopes that not all of

these will come from its own and AA's pockets. After all, the US wants extra slots to be made available as part of a broader agenda to open Heathrow to US airlines. In practice, however, BA and its partner will bear the brunt of the sacrifice. It would be a brave regulator who asked Virgin to give up slots to facilitate a BA/AA alliance.

Nevertheless, there will probably be room for horse-trading on the exact number. The creation of new slots at Heathrow will also take some pressure off BA/AA. And if the US regulators and Brussels let BA/AA phase their disposals over three to four years, the alliance will still have a lot going for it.

Ionica

Ionica is going for some ignominious records. It took the wireless telecommunications company only four months after last July's flotation to deliver a warning, and top management was changed in January. Now, still only 10 months after a flotation that raised £160m, the company is seeking an industry rescuer. In that time, its market value has plummeted from £840m to £61m, a fall so precipitous it makes the collapse of British Biotech look relatively sedate.

Of course, flotations of nascent, loss-making companies have wealth warnings attached. But where did those projections come from that heralded 200,000 connections by the end of this year? Ionica has struggled to about 50,000. And what of the valuation put on the company last summer by its adviser, SBC Warburg? Investors were supposed to take comfort from the fact that the shares were being offered at a discount.

The unpalatable reality is that the banks have dangled a sword of Damocles over the company since it started to miss its targets. To build its network, the company needs up to £800m. If it can raise £200m-£300m from a new investor, the banks should release the £300m they are sitting on. Ionica has enough cash to last until the autumn, which leaves a few months to find a partner. Doors to be knocked on include UK telecom companies, with which there might be synergies, and overseas operators seeking access to a potential UK network. Apart from the cash injection, Ionica also needs an endorsement of its technology from a serious industry player.

BankBoston offers \$800m for Robertson Stephens

By Tracy Corrigan and William
Lewis in New York and Gary
Harris in London

BankBoston, the US commercial bank, has offered \$800m for Robertson Stephens, the investment banking boutique bought last year by BankAmerica, according to people familiar with the negotiations.

The price is 50 per cent more than the \$540m BankAmerica paid to acquire Robertson Stephens last October and approximately eight times the investment bank's book value. It reflects the growing willingness of commercial banks to pay top dollar for investment banking franchises as the number of potential acquisition targets dwindles.

Alex Brown, Montgomery Securities, Oppenheimer and Wheat First Butcher Singer have all been snapped up in the past two years by commercial

banks, and the pace of consolidation in the financial services industry now appears to be speeding up, spurred on by the planned merger of Travelers and Citicorp.

Last month BankAmerica, after it agreed to merge with NationsBank, allowed Robertson Stephens to seek a new owner. NationsBank acquired Montgomery Securities, a rival of Robertson Stephens, which also serves the high-growth technology industry on the West Coast of the US, a year ago for \$1.2bn. Managers at the companies agreed there would be significant overlap between Robertson Stephens and Montgomery.

Mike McCaffery, president and chief executive of Robertson Stephens, said at the time that clients were "highly concerned" about the reduction in the number of sources of research and that they were "frustrated" by the wave of

consolidation in the financial services industry. BankBoston's offer for Robertson Stephens was first disclosed by TheStreet.com, the Internet business news service.

Credit Suisse First Boston, the investment bank owned by Credit Suisse, and JP Morgan, the US bank, are also thought to be potential bidders. Analysts say Robertson Stephens' west coast equities business and technology industry focus would fit well at either one.

Other potential buyers are believed to be First Union, the US commercial bank, and Dresdner Bank, the German owner of Dresdner Kleinwort Benson. A takeover by First Union, a highly acquisitive group, would intensify its rivalry with NationsBank.

But people close to the negotiations say the price BankBoston is prepared to pay has made it the front runner.

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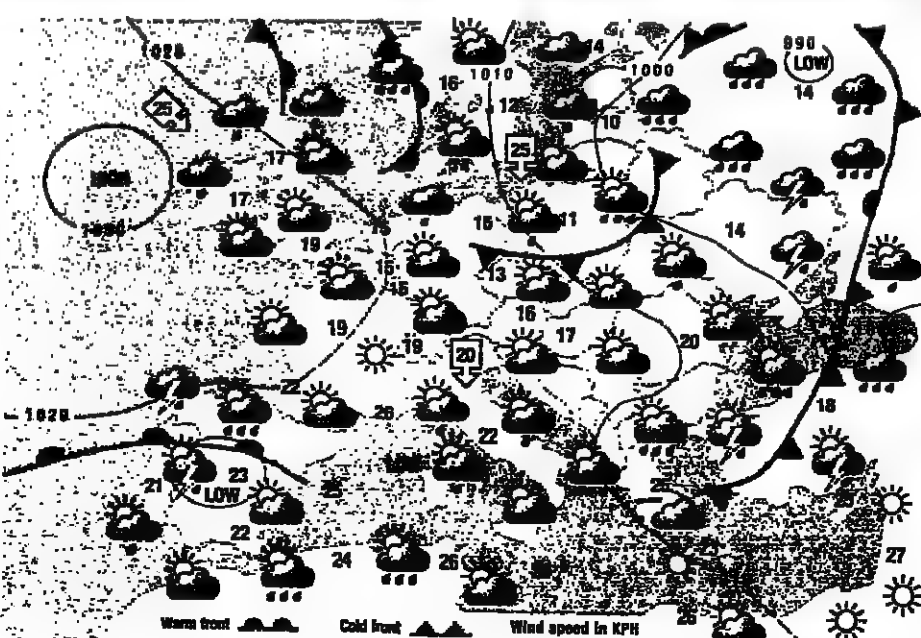
Markets Latest

FTSE 100	5,895.6	(+30.8)
Yield	2.78	(+0.03)
FTSE Europe 300	1,201.78	(+1.81)
FTSE All-Share	1,033.21	(+1.81)
Nikkei	15,801.86	(+43.0)
New York S&P 500	9,065.29	(+17.08)
Dow Jones Ind. Ave	9,282.12	(+3.77)
S & P Composite	1,106.67	(+1.73)
US LUNCHTIME RATES		
3-mo Interbank	7.13%	(7.13%)
Life long gilt bid	10.08%	(10.08%)
FEDERAL FUNDS RATE	5.25%	
3-m Treasury Bill	5.25%	
Long Bond	10.04%	
Yield	5.96%	
US NORTH SEA OIL (Argus)		
Brent Crude	\$14.31	(14.2)
WTI Crude	\$14.31	(14.2)
US GOLD		
New York Comex May	\$328.7	(328.7)
London	\$328.7	(328.7)

Weather

Europe today
Much of Scandinavia will have showers or longer spells of rain, with sleet in the north. Eastern and south-eastern Europe will be unsettled and colder than recently with scattered heavy showers, and thunderstorms are likely. Greece and the Balkans may have one or two sharp showers but they will die away, leaving spells of sunshine. The central Mediterranean and western Europe will be mostly dry with sunny spells, although Italy may have showers. The Iberian peninsula will have a scattering of heavy showers or thunderstorms.

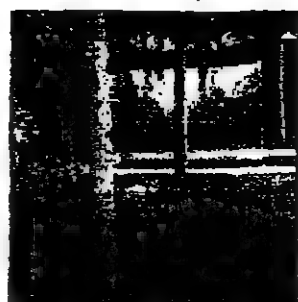
Five-day forecast
Eastern Europe will be cool but the rain will clear, leaving sunny spells and showers. Scandinavia will be showery, with sleet in the north. Heavy showers and thunderstorms over the Iberian peninsula will move to the central Mediterranean, but the east will be dry. Western Europe will have rain later.



TODAY'S TEMPERATURES		SITUATION at midday. Temperatures maximum for day. Forecasts by 'PA' WEATHER CENTRE	
Location	Temp	Location	Temp
Abu Dhabi	30	Cairo	25
Accra	28	Caracas	28
Algiers	24	Cebu	28
Amsterdam	15	Colon	28
Athens	25	Dakar	28
Bahia	28	Dallas	25
Bangkok	28	Doha	28
Buenos Aires	21	Dublin	15
Bombay	28	Edinburgh	14
Brazzaville	28	Geneva	18
Brisbane	28	Hankow	28
Buenos Aires	21	Hong Kong	28
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A spittoon with the FT
'Robert Parker is an indefatigable taster, a specialist in the marathon comparative line-up'



Gushing at Chelsea
'Almost everybody loved the central fountain which sprang from an upright rectangle of modern metal'



The colour of money
'It is likely that light colours have been chosen to demonstrate status through conspicuous consumption'

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The demise of death

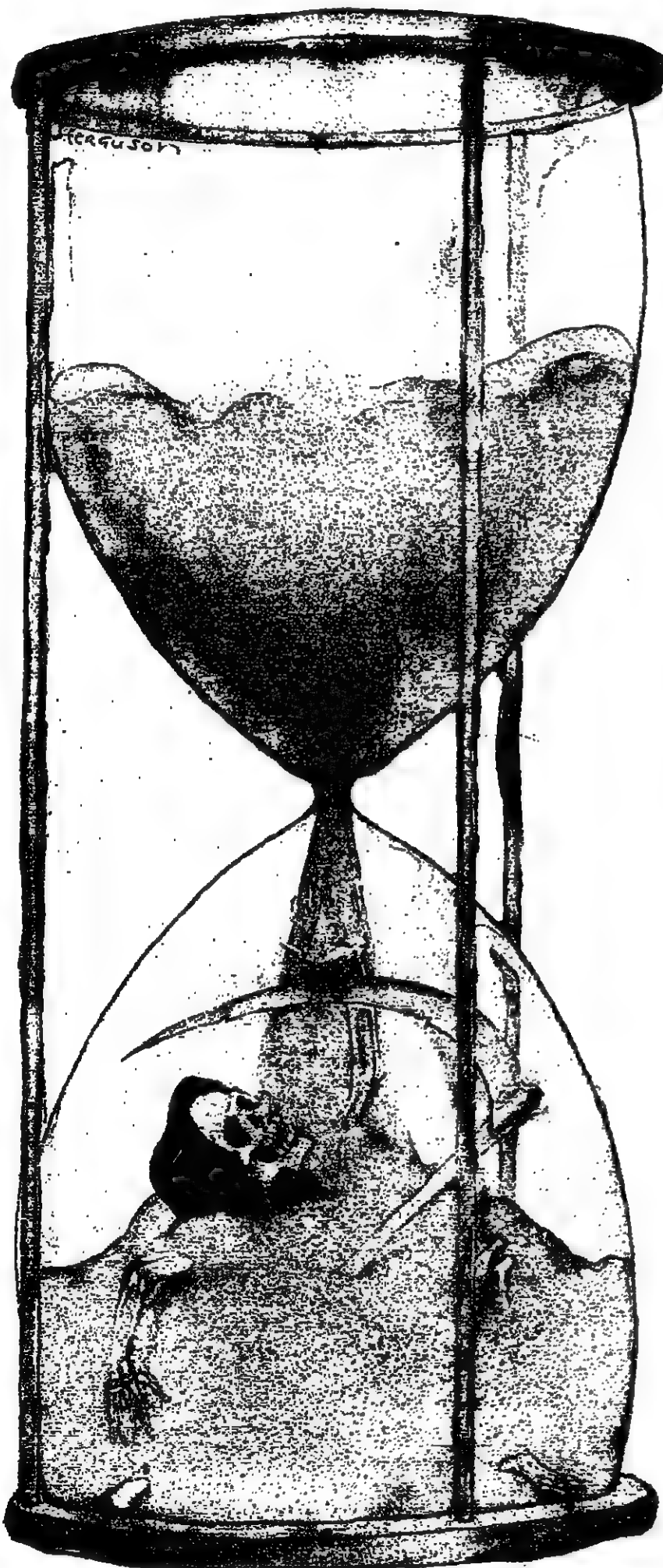
We have achieved a mastery over mortality, writes Christian Tyler, but at what cost to our lives?

Once, dying was all too easy. Now, it is beginning to look too difficult. The World Health Organisation celebrated its 50th birthday last week with the news that life expectancy worldwide, currently standing at 62, will rise to 73 at the end of the first quarter of the next century. By then, people in rich countries such as Britain can hope to live to 80. Medical experts are predicting even greater average life spans for the US, of 85 or even 100 by the year 2050. Some scientists think 140 is achievable.

Meanwhile, infant mortality has been so reduced that, for the first time in history, death is something which happens mainly to the old. As Peter Laslett, a social historian at Trinity College, Cambridge, and an octogenarian himself, said this week: "It is people like me who are doing all the dying for the rest of society."

Not all of us get our entitlement. A man called Herbie died last year in Ireland of stomach cancer at the age of 63. He achieved posthumous fame by agreeing to let the makers of a television series film his last hours. His death will be broadcast in the final episode of a BBC1 series called *The Human Body* which began this Wednesday.

Herbie's intention, according to the BBC, was to show that it is still possible to die with dignity, unafraid, and in your own bed. Answering complaints that to film Herbie's death was itself an affront to human dignity, a spokeswoman said the series



full works. They may have not done much for many years, then they swoop in and say, 'I'm here to see that everything possible is done.'

American research shows that the amount of treatment given to the dying depends not on their symptoms but on where in the US they happen to live. Doctors are torn between conflicting objectives, according to Sherwin Nuland, a Yale professor whose book *How We Die* was a bestseller; they are torn between doing what is best for their patients, and conquering illness in order to prolong life. It is the difference between the family doctor (in a hospital context, the geriatrician) and the specialist.

Nuland himself persuaded a 52-year-old woman in his care to have an operation which he judged she was able to tolerate. When it turned out more complicated than expected, she rightly felt betrayed. And she died shortly afterwards of something else. Yet, says Nuland, although he learned a lesson, the clinical decision was probably correct.

Death belongs properly to the dying, not to the doctors nor to the relatives. Even so, the question whether to intervene medically is not a simple one. Much depends on whether the ageing process can in practice be distinguished from disease (dementia of the Alzheimer type can occur in quite young people); and here opinion is divided. Many afflictions normally associated with the old can in fact be treated, and new surgical techniques make intervention less traumatic. Treatment late in life may not only be worthwhile, but actually cost-saving.

Ageing is a fact, and the idea of dying from old age is attractive, says Raymond Tallis, professor of geriatric medicine at the Hope Hospital in Salford; the idea is of a "gradual but harmonious failure of all organs". But is it realistic? And would death by old age be an improvement?

Despite suspicions to the contrary, hospitals try to do what patients want, and what will work, according to Professor Irene Higginson, a specialist in palliative care working at St Christopher's hospice in south London. If some patients are treated too intensively, that is only because doctors do not know accurately enough in advance what will work.

The modern hospice movement started in Britain with the aim of providing a friendlier death for the terminally ill - especially those with cancer, motor neurone disease and, latterly, AIDS. It aims to look after the whole person (and the family) while using sophisticated methods of pain control.

St Christopher's, a charity with a pioneering reputation, has expanded outwards to look after a wider range of patients, including those in hospital and those still living at home. To that extent it is reviving, in a more institutional and professional way, some of the ideas of how dying should be done. Not surprisingly, in view of their religious origins, hospices seem to be reintroducing the kind of psychological framework for death formerly supplied by a belief in

an after-life. When everybody believed in life after death, in reward and punishment, in the wisdom of a divine dispensation, when dying was normal and when its rituals were determined by the clergy, death was perhaps more acceptable, if no less terrible.

People were taught to live as if each day were their last, to see death round every corner. Today, it is something to be ignored for as long as it can be, and circumvented if possible. Perhaps because of this loss of religious faith, families are spending less than they did on funerals, and richer fam-

Today, death is something to be ignored for as long as it can be, and circumvented if at all possible

lies are spending less than poorer. "No society ever existed which rejected death more absolutely than ours," says Peter Laslett.

A fashionably nostalgic - and typically "green" - version of death is promoted by the Natural Death Centre, which publishes a "good funeral guide" and directs people towards woodland burial grounds and cardboard coffins (ecologically sounder than cremation with mahogany). Started by three psychotherapists, it can be seen as a successor to the natural childbirth movement which prospered in the 1970s; it advises on how to care for someone dying at home.

Urbanisation, smaller fam-

ilies, mobility, have all conspired against the home death. Nicholas Albery, one of the founders, explained that even with the best of intentions, families may lose their nerve as the end approaches, and ring for the ambulance. He added that for those who have accepted death as inevitable, it is easier to die at home than in a hospital ward: like Hindus, they can simply stop eating.

Others have reacted to the supposed perils of hospital over-treatment by giving directions in advance. The so-called living will is not as popular in Britain as it is in the US (where perhaps it may be more necessary). Although comforting for the person whose signature is on it, the living will is not infallible. Doctors point out that it is impossible to forecast all the circumstances (or even to make sure the will is to hand at the moment of crisis), and theologians worry about the moral consequences of instructions that could amount to attempted suicide.

Living wills are actively encouraged by euthanasia. But if longevity is a problem - and it is a big "if" - euthanasia is not an answer, even if the moral and practical objections to it could be overcome. For only in very few cases does the question of assisted suicide arise.

Other solutions might include rationing of treatment for the old - the concept of the "fair innings" - or, perhaps in the distant future, some genetic manipulation which will programme a self-by date into each newborn child.

Or perhaps, modifying the Titanic principle and exploiting their appetite for hanging and bungee-jumping, old people could be offered hazardous jobs, as nuclear power station attendants

and motorcycle couriers. It probably won't be necessary. For the same WHO report which promises longevity - eventually even to poorer countries - also talks about "health expectancy". Here too, the news is good. "Whatever the country examined," the WHO says, "the increase in life expectancy is not accompanied by an increase in the time spent with severe disability." In other words, the quality of life appears to be keeping pace with the quantity.

Furthermore, doctors report that medicine is making inroads into the disabilities of the old, such as blindness, deafness, immobility and stroke. Cancer and dementia may eventually yield to the assault of research. Even the costs of treating the old may decline in relative terms as knowledge expands.

Contrary to popular opinion, says Raymond Tallis, longer life is not inevitably going to be purchased at the cost of extra suffering or "unacceptable pressure on the public purse".

So the real problem of longevity is that there will be a lot of fit old people about. And it will be up to them to make the plans, find the jobs, invent the projects which will make life worth living. In that world, attitude will be everything.

None of this, of course, can remove the pain of the prospect of death. But Montaigne, who thought about it more than most people, has a cure. "To begin depriving death of its greatest advantage over us, let us adopt a way clean contrary to that common one," he wrote. "Let us deprive death of its strangeness; let us frequent it, let us get used to it... Is it reasonable to fear for so long a time something which lasts so short a time?"

We are more likely to be afraid not of pain, but of a futile prolongation of life by doctors

would have been "incomplete" without it. "We are showing that death is a natural part of life."

And so it is. Yet dying is difficult. Not only does it come ever later, but it is often physically arduous and psychologically disturbing, a mystery hard to contemplate. It can be ugly and messy, and although fictional deaths glorified for film and television seem ever more popular, the real thing has been swept out of public view.

In advanced societies, fewer people know, or care to know, how to deal with it. The untrained women in every street or village who used to "lay out" the dead and comfort the living have been superseded. In 1995, only a fifth of people in England and Wales died in their own houses.

Newspaper and magazine articles usually concern the tragic deaths of children, or of talented people cut off prematurely. They are about the suffering of the living, not about the people who are doing most of the dying: the old.

Nobody dies of old age any more, at least not according to the official statistics. No

wonder, then, that as more people count on living beyond their Biblical allotment of three score and ten, so more are worried about what kind of death to expect. They want to enjoy a natural death (whatever that means), to die when they are ready, and to be present, so to speak, when it happens.

The news from the WHO looks good. But will the extra years be worth having? The economic cost alone of our predicted longevity is alarming: finance ministers around the world, for something like half of all the state money spent on the health of citizens is consumed in the last year of

their lives. More worrying for the individual is whether the price of longevity will turn out to be long years of illness and infirmity. Will we, like Tithonus in the Greek myth, gain the gift of immortality without the gift of eternal youth?

People used to fear the pain associated with death. Michel de Montaigne, the French essayist whose observations on this topic are as pertinent today as they were when he wrote them in the late 16th century, confessed to being obsessed by it. These days, we are more likely to be afraid not of pain, but of a futile prolongation of life by high-tech

medical intervention. Montaigne quotes Lucretius: "Why seek to add more, just to lose it again, wretchedly, without joy?"

Although humans cling tenaciously to life - which is why death can be physically so difficult - it is not usually the old who insist on the full panoply of medical treatment. Dr Nick Comi, who has just retired as consultant geriatrician at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge, has watched many people die. He said the old tend to underestimate what can be done for them. Although doctors sometimes try to do too much, "it is very often the relatives who insist on the



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In FT Weekend

PERSPECTIVES



Joe Rogaly

Arts hit a high note when business booms

Capitalism is the death of culture, isn't it? Commerce dulls our artistic sensibilities. Not so, it seems

Capitalism cancels culture. Money corrupts the creative mind. The mass market for the arts is a machine managed by mammoth for the mulching of morons. Corporations cram their coffers with cash from crap. Such are the cigar-smoke induced opinions of those of us who at best mistrust the liberal market economy and at worst believe it to be the messenger of doom. Hollywood is a pusher, marketing the opium of the people. The tabloids are tearing us out. Science and technology have been developed to the highest degree, but when it comes to our artistic sensibilities we are in the darkest of ages. I could continue along such lines, spinning gloomy word-

bites, as we all could on this subject, could we not? But I have been doused with cold water, and by an economist at that. A new book, *In Praise of Commercial Culture*, proclaims that a thriving capitalist society sustains the arts better than any other form of social organisation. Its author, Tyler Cowen, is professor of economics at George Mason University in Virginia. He concedes that television does not provide much support for cultural optimists, but argues persuasively that literature, western art, and music - "from Bach to the Beatles" - flourish best when businesses are profitable and opportunities for innovative artists to find customers are multiplied. Let us take a deep breath. This is an American book, first pub-

lished in the United States, out in a few weeks in Britain. Some Europeans adopt an attitude of lofty disdain for works emanating from the western side of the Atlantic. Their minds are so infused with images of the super-republic at its worst that they fail to see the best in it. Fortunately, you and I are aware that the American intelligentsia is in most respects superior to its old-world counterparts. We know about illiteracy in the capitals of capitalism, but Professor Cowen tells us, the wealthiest and most commercial countries are, "by and large, also the most literate". Take the US. Between 1947 and 1996, the list of titles in print rose from 85,000 to 1.8m. The number of publishers increased, he says, from 887 to 48,000-plus. There are ten times

as many bookshops as there were 50 years ago. In the print supermarkets of today, best-sellers, mostly low culture, account for a mere 8 per cent of sales. As to the fine arts, the Renaissance was the product of a commercial revolution. Most of the prominent painters and sculptors of Florence were initially goldsmiths or their pupils. Michelangelo could name his terms to buyers who were customers rather than patrons. The cult of enjoyment and gratification encouraged artistic activity. The decline began, we are informed, when Florence lost its position of relative economic supremacy. The Dutch and Flemish masters, and later the French impressionists, applied their brush strokes within flourishing

capitalist cultures of wealth and conspicuous consumption. Central authorities, be they the later Medicis or the French Salon, usually support bland mediocrities. How about music, then? Surely, we cultural conservatives protest, today's pop is all noise and shouting. Perhaps, but the sheer quantity of recordings, concerts, and broadcasts provides something for every taste, including what to me is the incomprehensible dissonance inflicted on us by certain modern composers. So many performers have made recordings of familiar older works, the ones we all agree are classics, that there is a glut on the market. The works of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven reach more people, sitting in greater

comfort, than in the composers' lifetimes. These glories of the past cannot be repeated. "The 20th century has seen world musical leadership switch from the Germanic lands to the New World," says our professor. The blues, gospel, jazz, rock and roll, and their offshoots, all with roots in Afro-America, enrich global culture for us all. I remain to be convinced that the same can honestly be said of rap. But when he says that contemporary popular music "encourages freedom, nonconformism, and a skeptical attitude towards authority", we might concur. That is not the reason why Britain's new Labour administration seems so comfortable in the company of pop artists. Low

Lunch with the FT The spit that echoes around the world

Jancis Robinson shares a bottle or two with Robert Parker, fount of international wine wisdom

We live on opposite sides of the Atlantic, but Robert M. Parker Jr. and I have much in common. We both grew up in farming country and dutifully did our degrees (law for him, maths and philosophy for me). Then, in the mid-1970s, just before setting into a regular professional life, we were smitten by something - wine - which, in our separate ways, we have transformed into a career. By diligently applying the principles of Ralph Nader to the US wine market, Parker has achieved fame and fortune on a scale unprecedented for a wine writer. He is an enviably retentive and indefatigable taster, a specialist in the marathon comparative line-up. But his masterstroke was to score the wines he tasted with points up to 100 - the intangible was suddenly measurable. Mine has been the travel road. The thrill as much in the journey as in the glass. Finding a time and a place for lunch was difficult. Parker first suggested we meet early at Gatwick while he changed aircraft on his way home from Bordeaux; then, at Baltimore airport on my way back from California. In the end, he elected to have lunch cooked by his wife at home, a place I barely recognised from my first visit a decade ago. Thanks to his extraordinary success, the modest brown ranch in Marysville's gentle woodland has been transformed into an architect's elegant, pale grey dream: extended upwards, outwards and, important for a man who will not even hint at how much wine there is in his three cellars, downwards.

As he went off to get an aperitif, I studied the walls lined with portraits of the young Parker, his wife and daughter, and the various dogs to which he writes regular sentimental tributes in his *Wine Advocate*. A typical photograph shows the Parkers as a nervous young couple apparently at their first formal dinner in a smart French restaurant.

Today, Parker is recognised throughout France, thanks to an hour-long television programme about him during which he managed to identify nine out of 10 wines sneakily presented to him to taste blind. His book, *The Guide, Parker des Vins de France*, was in the French bestseller lists for 27 weeks. Wine retailers throughout

the US have given up selecting wines themselves; they simply scoop over Parker's heavy-lifted. The producers of the first California wine to earn a Parker 90, a Groth Cabernet-Sauvignon, have built a spanking designer winery on the proceeds. He has more than 45,000 subscribers to his unflinching, bimonthly newsletter, has just launched a French version, and is currently fielding inquiries about the Russian and Chinese rights to his books. This profound influence is summed up by the motto "When Parker spits, the world listens", embroidered on a cushion given him by his agent.

"It's just Dom Pérignon '90," he said apologetically as he padded back from one of many fridges. Parker brought in a platter of smoked salmon, something well above the standard of any restaurant I could imagine in the simple farmland among which they have lived all their lives.

On this visit, I sensed a certain disaffection with his native state. In a move to protect the notorious three-tier liquor distribution system in the US, some bene-

dicts have successfully lobbied to have shipments of wine to individuals outlawed in various states. He is suing Maryland as a result. "Last fall," said Parker indignantly, "I received a letter from the man who regulates alcohol here saying, 'We understand you have wine samples delivered. This is illegal, has been illegal and, if it continues, there will be severe penalties.' So I called him up and asked what I had to do to get a permit. 'I filled out the forms. I mean, I'm hitting my lip, my blood pressure's rising... These bureaucrats! So I went down to meet this man. He was the quintessential little Caesar. He said: 'You'll be happy to know that we have certified you as a wine expert.' Parker sipped some champagne and rolled his eyes. "He gave me a permit to receive samples and I was just walking out of the door when he said: 'By the way, this is not really going to help you, you know, because



"The more successful I've been in France, the more I've seen a real party side to the French critics"

we have no intention of giving permits to any truckers to deliver to you".

Over Pat's gently spiced Maryland crab cakes, with tarragon sauce, I asked Parker what he did with what must be oceans of wine left over from his tastings - at least 10,000 bottles a year. As he had done a decade earlier, he nodded towards a particularly green grassy bank in the English garden that is Pat Parker's prime interest. With lunch, he had thoughtfully decided to serve some top California wines he reckoned might not have come my way. The Chardonnays were a 1995 Peter Michael, quite delicious, and a practically unobtainable 1994 Marcas.

With the main course, *confit de canard* imported by Parker on his Bordeaux trip to taste the '97s, he served 1981s from two of the hottest vintages, Arago and Domini. As luck would have it, these happened to be the only great California wines I had tasted during my visit there the previous week.

A problem has emerged for the Parker palate, however. He told me how he had limped back from Bordeaux in agony from his second attack of gout, brought on by the sweetbreads which Alain Juppé, the former prime minister, had chosen to serve him at a private dinner for him and Baroness Philippine de Rothschild of Chateau Mouton-Rothschild. "This reminded me to challenge him over his oft-vaunted independence. Parker goes to great pains to suggest that he, and he alone, among wine writers is completely independent of, and untainted by, any hospitality from any wine producer. Yet he seems suspiciously well acquainted with the chateaux owners,

there are all those free samples winging their illegal way to his home, and, I pointed out, when he makes one of his relatively rare visits to a wine region, he depends on members of the trade, who must have vested interests, to set up his famous tastings. He completely, and revealingly, misunderstood the point of my question. "Ten years ago, probably at the time when you saw me, I thought I was getting portrayed as this aloof, arrogant person, which is not at all like I am. So I thought I needed to meet more of the trade, which probably is something I really don't like to do."

"I'm not a networker... I thought people needed to see who I was. So, over the past 10 years, I've done lots of charity dinners where people we don't know come here, have some champagne and then we go and have some fine wines from my cellar in a nearby restaurant. In fact," he said, looking slightly acutely at the photographer, "we could have sold that

padding back from the fridge, he apologised: 'It's just Dom Pérignon '90'

seat today for a fortune." Having for years admired the confidence with which he delivers his sometimes devastating judgments, I asked him what he considered his biggest mistake. I thought he might mention the 1988 burgundies which he seriously overrated, or the 1990 Bordeaux which, initially, he underrated.

But no. He looked up at the skylight, as though invoking a being of equal status, smiled and asked rhetorically: "Have there been any mistakes?" He paused to point out to Pat that his place lacked a dessert fork. "I think probably my aggressiveness in Burgundy in trying to get them into working the way I work in Bordeaux. But keep in mind that, even when they were revolting, I was still visiting 40 to 50 domaines on each visit."

A few years ago, "they", a group of the best Burgundy producers, ganged up and refused to send along cask samples to one central point in a broker's or merchant's office or a hotel room - an important factor in Parker's prodigious tasting routine. The downside of Parker's quite extraordinary confidence, and resultant power, is of course that he is a natural target for criticism, especially since the Internet has become such a popular hangout for the people we used to call wine bores. Some of Britain's most knowledgeable connoisseurs have attacked him for scoring something as variable and subjective as wine.

I asked whether he felt the Brits had been more vicious than most. "Well, the French can get very nasty," he said, slicing into his portion of Parker's creamy cheesecake. "The more successful I've been in France, the more I've seen a real party side to the French critics. The English tend to criticise each other."

"As long as it doesn't get personal, I think people have a right to criticise someone who has this kind of impact. The success of the scoring system throughout the world is far beyond anything I ever imagined." I wondered how heavily the responsibilities of such

power weighed on him? "I don't think about it. I have a job to do and I do it. And I think the fact that I have this influence is because most of the people, most of the time, tend to agree with the conclusions I've reached and so they have given my views more credibility. "The sad thing is that other people, and there are good people - you're pretty good," he smiled sheepishly. "There are incredible people out there who have just as much knowledge and experience and offer opinions that don't have the same impact. That always puzzles me and I don't know really have an explanation for that."

I had to tackle him on his apparent palate preferences, which seem already to have influenced the way people make wine, especially in Bordeaux. Because his judgments are based on these enormous line-ups, the big, obvious wines naturally stand out and the more subtle are sometimes overlooked. He shrugged and laughed again: "I guess it's one of these things I'll go to the grave with - he only likes big wines and he knows nothing about burgundy."

But when I switched off the tape recorder, he turned to me earnestly. "What do you think though? Has Parkerisation been good for wine?"

"There was hardly time for me to say Yes and No in a suitably English way before he had to drive me to Baltimore airport for his beloved overnight flight to Gatwick (his usual routine is to buy two economy seats and work through the night). As we were leaving, he offered me a bottle or two of the Oregon Pinot Noir that he and Pat's brother produce. "I never accept samples from producers," I said.

Vintage Clicquot

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CHAMPAGNE OF THE SEASON

PERSPECTIVES



Truth of the Matter

Paradise? Try Swindon

The concept of the perfect is always threatened by banality, writes James Morgan

For western man and woman the Garden of Eden remains the paradigm. Thus, today, Adam and Eve decorate the back of a London bus as they wander, glassy-eyed, through a lush, green paradise enhanced by fronds of what appears to be scarlet wisteria.

They are promoting a certain brand of jeans. It is a confusing message which seems to imply the lame Aryan duo have lost their innocence as a result of donning the ubiquitous garment of the secular world. Maybe I have misread the message and the jeans represent a state of grace.

Whichever, the effect is loathsome. But it reflects the narrow divide between Eden and kitsch that has long dogged Christianity. Indeed, the concept of the perfect is always threatened by banality. Half the products of Walt Disney, the US entertainment company, are impelled to include a fertile valley of plenitude, thronged with fluffy representations of the animal kingdom, teeth capped and claws drawn.

This is bad enough, but Eden, paradise and heaven face even worse problems in attracting the masses because they lack any hackneyed representations of a secular idyll. Angels, harps and cotton-wool clouds are even less attractive than an advertisement for jeans or a Bambi gambolling amid a circle of friendly carnivores.

Perfection has an image problem. It cannot be, and when we find it we know it is not real and cannot last. There is the Disney-style valley, best seen from a passing train which protects us from its moorland bites; the rich pasture that conceals a thousand forgotten corpses from some distant war; the river whose seductive whiteness is a melange of lethal chemicals and rotting fish.

If that were not enough, we recognise perfection, such as it is, only in retrospect. When we found a natural rock pool in the mountains of Corsica we said: "Gosh what a lovely rock pool!" It was perfect only in our photographs. These did not include a man and his father - a one-legged veteran of the Wehr-

macht's Russian campaign - who shared our little secret. Today, the rock pool is a representation of heaven, but only as a picture.

It is strange how rarely the exotic forms our image. Although we may dream of the palm-fringed beach of a desert island, that is not our picture of the Garden of Eden. (Maybe it is to Filipinos, or maybe to them it is no more heavenly than the East River to a New Yorker.)

I once spent a night on a desert island and it was a kind of paradise thanks in part to a group of Royal Engineers from the then British barracks in Singapore who buried half a ton of ice on the beach with a few dozen packs of Tiger beer. They then lit fires on which we barbecued fish caught by Malay fishermen in abundance - and with astonishing ease, for the innocent fishfolk had laced a mainland estuary with a mild piscine sedative.

The Garden of Eden contains, for us from temperate climes, willows and wisteria, apples, sunshine dapples and paté de foie eaten to the sound of trumpets and the occa-

sional pop of a d'Yquem cork. We scour the holiday brochures in vain but live in hope: at the end of a rainbow there is some as yet unvisited land eternally warm but never steamy, where nothing bites in the night, where the wine is forever fresh on the palate, yet where even the third bottle brings no hangover.

Once California offered such bounty, but today the golden state is a land of mudslides, fire and earthquakes where fine food is a pasta noodle served on burnt fish with bottled water and no clogs. We shall still go on looking. But even when we sense it, we should not seek it out. It is 20 years since I saw Arcadia in the travel section of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. It was a black and white *déjeuner sur l'herbe*, a photograph of sunlit trees, a lawn running down to a stream, a picnic on a white tablecloth, a wine cooler and handsome guests.

The caption said: "Idyll im englischen Wiltshire." Somewhere near Swindon it really exists, but I have never dared to go to look.

Snake liquor and reminiscence at Madame Dai's

Paul Mendelson has an audience with the owner of Ho Chi Minh City's Bibliothèque restaurant

Night is falling, and we have a mission: this is to meet the famous Nguyen Phuoc Dai, at her restaurant, La Bibliothèque, in Ho Chi Minh City. My informant has told me to travel by bicycle; the driver will know of La Bibliothèque. His face lights up. Unfortunately, the smile is more to do with my money than empathetic.

Cycles are silent, and the seat, positioned ahead of the driver, is surprisingly comfortable. Whenever you stop, you are immediately surrounded by cyclists and, if you venture a smile, you are rewarded with mass smiling back, children waving, students wanting to shake your hand, find out from where you hail, wanting to practise their English. "Do you have a dog?" No. "Do you have a cat?" Yes. "Do you have a goose...?" And so it goes on.

As your chair is pedalled past shadowy, incense-filled temples, glittering monuments and turbulent markets, all pointed out with toothless grins by your driver, you glean fleeting images of life in what, until 1975, was Saigon; you become enraptured by the atmosphere of the streets and interaction with the people, and you realise that you are not merely an observer. Ho Chi Minh City and its inhabitants have made you part of itself.

La Bibliothèque is advertised by a disappointingly garish black and white fluorescent sign, and no sooner do we fall within its illumination than we are gathered up by an elderly chap lounging on the step and hustled inside. Madame Dai, descended from the royal line, was, and remains, a respected figure.

When the Communists took over in 1975, she was made to choose between her grand country estate, and her legal offices in the centre of Ho Chi Minh City. She chose the latter, and as we enter her restaurant, we are greeted by the dusty colours and sepia tones of her tiny high-ceilinged, book-lined dining room. Peeling bookshelves house a variety of volumes, all weighty, in an eclectic variety of languages. Alcoves display the ubiquitous Buddhas and yellowing plaster busts.

The six tables are

unadorned as we are seated and two ladies appear modestly from the kitchen. They open drawers solemnly and pull out stained silver cutlery. Menus are dusted down and laid before us, and small, sad flowers are placed on our table. Lights are switched on and off, dimmed back and forth until, eventually, the gloom is judged to be just so.

We choose the set menu of Vietnamese food, and hope that Madame Dai is at home. It soon arrives in small portions, and so does Madame Dai. She greets us - and discovers we have a mutual friend. She takes her place next to me, and rests her hands in her lap.

Our conversation is conducted in French and English and occasionally Vietnamese, and there is the

'Every night for 10 years I would go to sleep, and wake straight away'

odd awkward pause where it is obvious we do not understand one another. These are concluded in time-honoured fashion - murmuring, smiling and nodding.

Her eyes invite interview. We begin with the restaurant business. "People are suspicious of restaurants," she begins. "The women want to squeeze and study and taste every last ingredient at the market, the men are fussy, and everyone still eats with family, however old they are. Meals are the time the family meets."

Madame Dai speaks a little of 1975. An important legal figure, she feared that the new regime would want to be rid of her. "Every night," she tells us, "every night for 10 years I would go to sleep, and wake straight away, I was certain, you see, that they were coming for me..." But they never came, and Madame Dai continued to work quietly behind the scenes, becoming something of a one-woman citizens' advice bureau.

She retained her reputation. In diplomatic circles, you were not accepted until you had been granted an audience with Madame Dai. When new postings arrived in Ho Chi Minh City they

had all been briefed that a meeting at La Bibliothèque was an essential beginning to their new lives.

"Much important conversation has taken place within these walls," Madame Dai divulges to me - and to anyone else, doubtless. One gets a faint feeling she is good at talking up her influence. And yet when cards are exchanged, hers reveal she is president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Vietnam, and president of the Vietnam International Arbitration Centre. "And the... of course," she adds with a smile, "there are my appointments in France."

A container, looking suspiciously like a catering-size jar of pickled onions, is placed on the table. Fifty small snakes - seven varieties apparently - are immersed in rice spirit, together with strips of root ginger, ginseng, and cloves. For reasons we are unable to discern, the concoction is stored underground for at least 100 days.

The lid is unscrewed and I brace myself for a waft of formaldehyde, a reminder of biology labs at school. No aroma is forthcoming and I relax. My resolve stiffens. As the liquid is decanted into tiny glasses, I become aware of my heart beating from within the depths of Madame Dai's dinner.

My companion and I are about to raise our glasses to our lips when I notice a bird's head about two thirds of the way down the pickle jar. Madame Dai is mildly irritated at the interruption to the ritual. "I do not know," she pronounces with a dismissive wave, "whether this is a chicken. It is of no concern..."

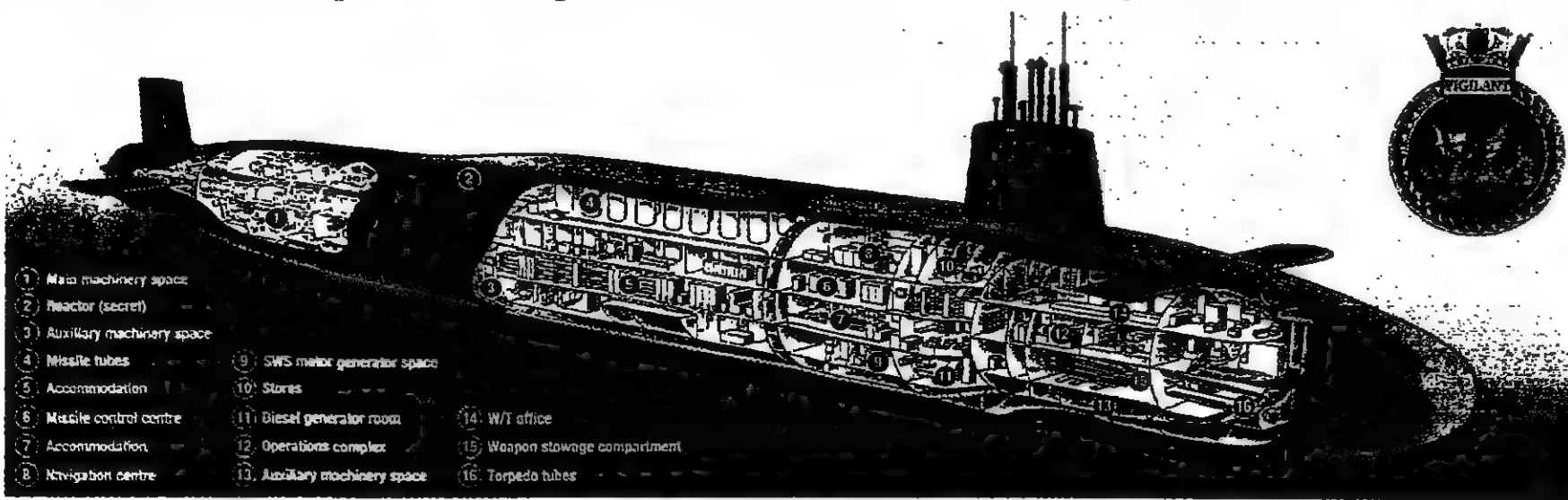
Somewhat disarmingly, the liquid is rather pleasant - slightly herbal and quite unrepellent. My companion accepts a second glass, and Madame Dai is impressed. "It will help you to sleep," she tells us, "and it is also a powerful aphrodisiac."

Before we pay the bill, Madame Dai rises to leave. She bows, shakes our hands and waves regally as she backs through the door.

When she has gone, the room seems very quiet and empty. We pay and leave. There seems no reason to stay. The presence - an embodiment of a city whose ghosts have hardly begun to talk - had evaporated.

The disappearing act

Alexander Nicoll plumbs the depths of submarine culture in the Navy's latest nuclear deterrent



Anatomy of a peacekeeper: Vigilant's crew are barred from taking on board deodorants, talcum powder, and aftershave to ease the load on the vessel's air purification system

Some time in the next few days, the cull, "diving stations, diving stations", will ring out through HMS Vigilant, the Royal Navy's newest nuclear submarine.

The officer of the watch will take a last look at the Firth of Clyde and climb down from the "bridge" at the top of what in the old days would have been the conning tower, but is now just called the fin.

Commander Shaun Turner, the boat's captain, and every other man in the cramped control room will wait for sonar, radar and visual images to show no vessel is near and all is safe. With a 150-metre, 16,000-tonne boat carrying 16 Trident nuclear missiles, it is important to get everything right.

Finally, the call will come: "Diving now, diving now." The stern will dip, and then the bow "I have the bubble," a rating will cry as he gains control over the balance between fore and aft.

Another will call out each metre of depth as the submarine quietly sinks beneath the waves and disappears. For the next three months, nobody outside Vigilant will know where it is. It will not surface. It will not visit any port, it will emit no communications at all. In the control room, a black curtain will be pulled across a compartment containing the chart-table. Only the dozen people allowed behind the curtain will know the boat's location as it meanders through the Nato patrol area assigned to the captain.

This will be Vigilant's first patrol. Its entry into service eases the burden on its sister boats, Vanguard and Victorious. For two years since the last Polaris was retired, one of the two has been at sea at all times. Britain's

nuclear deterrent has been maintained by a patrolling submarine without a break since 1988.

The addition of Vanguard, the last Vanguard-class boat, due to come into service by the end of the century, will give Britain the four boats the Navy deems necessary to keep one constantly on patrol. Why four? At any time, one will be at sea; one may be in refit or having its nuclear reactor refuelled; one will be undergoing maintenance and preparing for the next patrol; and one will be training and providing insurance against something going wrong.

Vigilant, like its sister boats, is at once a missile silo and a nuclear power station, equipped to be all-detecting but undetectable. It must know everything

about what is going on around, below and above it. But it must not be traceable by any kind of sensing equipment. The boat's outer covering consists of acoustic tiles preventing signals from outside from echoing back to other vessels' sonars, and internal noise from getting out. On patrol, it will use only "passive" sensors, sending out no sonar "pings" or radar beams, because these would give away its position. Everybody must keep quiet - although the engine room is surprisingly noisy.

Apart from the boat's location, there are other things which cannot be talked about. Nine years after the fall of the Berlin Wall at what targets would the Trident 2 D5 missiles be directed? Each 45-ft long, 60-tonne missile is a three-

stage, solid-fuel rocket, made in the US and loaded at Kings Bay, Georgia. The thermonuclear warhead, made at Aldermaston in England, carries eight separate re-entry vehicles which

Only the dozen people behind the curtain know the boat's location

can be directed to targets 4,000 miles away.

Cdr Turner, tall and burly at 44 with a wife and 18-year-old daughter, has been a submariner for 23 years. He says of the deadly

weapons in his charge: "They are in the inventory of the UK. It's one of the responsibilities which has fallen to me. It's a responsibility which I view seriously, but not anything more than that."

The ship's company understand that you cannot disavow nuclear weapons," he says - speaking, as it happened, just minutes after India had detonated three nuclear devices in the Rajasthan desert. It is for politicians to decide what Britain will do with its capability, Cdr Turner says. "We have a military function to perform. The threat may have changed, but there is still a very clear-cut commitment by the government."

The order to fire Trident missiles would come from the prime minister and

arrive in the communications room in a coded message from the Navy's command bunker at Northwood, Middlesex. From that point, two people have to be involved at every stage of the firing process. The message is checked for authenticity and codes giving targets - the officers do not know their identity - programmed into the weapons.

The captain, at his place in the control room, has a key to turn. The weapon engineer officer, in the missile control room, has a trigger to squeeze.

Keeping the Trident missiles and Spearfish torpedoes in safe working order is the task of over 40 of the crew of around 140. "The standards of a nuclear weapons system are absolute, and we maintain them rigorously," says

Lieutenant Commander Charles Strick, the weapons officer. Naval officers conduct surprise inspections, grilling crews on maintenance of the weapons systems. Those whose answers are not up to the mark are asked to leave the boat with the inspectors.

The boat and its men have to be self-sufficient. Cramped in every available space is food for 100 days. Water is made from sea water through electrolysis, and air is constantly purified. To avoid too much of a load on the purification system, deodorants, talcum powder, and aftershave are forbidden. Every space is used: rowing machines and exercise bicycles are in the "gym" - actually two narrow corridors alongside the missile tubes.

Officers profess not to understand why people would worry about claustrophobia. Because of the height of the missile tubes, Vanguard-class boats are big - almost as large as Britain's Invincible-class aircraft carriers. The spaces seem no more confined than on parts of a frigate.

Submariners like the fact that life is more predictable and stable than on other assignments. "They are paid more than their counterparts on surface ships. And they like the team spirit. Cdr Turner calls himself a 'failed civilian' because he once left the Navy for a year, returning 'because of the people, the corporate effort, the unity of effort'."

Separation from families is the biggest problem for most men. Each week, each family is allowed to send a 40-word "familygram". The men cannot reply.

"I don't think anybody looks forward to being away from their families. You just hope that your family is strong enough," says Petty Officer Rob Onar. Wives have to deal by themselves with whatever crises happen during a patrol. "We turn up months later and expect everything to be tickety-boo."

Stresses on family life can increase when the submarine returns to base at Faslane on the Clyde. That is when everything that has gone wrong with the boat has to be fixed. Men find themselves working over 100 hours a week just when their families expect them to be at home.

"Being at sea isn't really the problem," says Warrant Officer Brian Hall, a submariner for 23 years. "When you're alongside the wall [in harbour] and putting all the hours in, that's the heart-breaking thing."

BOOKS

From Eden to Armageddon

But the tale of the west's subjugation of tribal peoples is more complicated, argues Nigel Spivey

Blood was not spilled at first sight. When Columbus dropped anchor off the Caribbean islands in 1492 he met with an *amor maritimo*, an amazing affection. It was not born of naivety, though the Indians regarded him as a pale-skinned demigod arrived in supernatural craft. It was the instinctual behaviour of those raised in the Earthly Paradise.

But on arrival Columbus raised the Spanish royal standard. Local generosity did not alter his brief to trump discovery with possession. Sovereignty could be assumed in the name of redeeming the Promised Land. Columbus took some half-dozen natives back to become the godchildren of his sponsors, Ferdinand and Isabella. Precious metals were on his list of acquisitions; but their value, he thought, directly lay in funding the Christian conquest of Jerusalem.

The proselytising motives of Europeans beyond Europe are not considered in Mark Cocker's account of "the European consumption of tribal society". He allows no room for any factors which might qualify or mitigate the horror story he has to tell. As a retrospective polemic, therefore, *Rivers of Blood* gains strength from its cumulative devotion to emphasising the massacre of innocents in the Americas, Africa and the Antipodes. All delicacy of historical argument is sacrificed to that end.

Which some readers may find counter-productive. This is after all an essay of synthesis rather than the product of new research; and it can hardly claim to be fundamentally revisionist, since no more than a saloon-full of old foggies these days can feel morally satisfied by the chronicle of European colonisation. Proceeding from the ominous observation made by Columbus that "with 50 men you could subject every one and make them do as you wish", Cocker assembles a quartet of case-studies illustrating just such effortless subjugation.

So we have Spanish Cortes (who can bring themselves to call him "stout") carving through Mexico; the British, bounding down the Tasmanian Aborigines; the rout of Geronimo and his Apaches in New Mexico; and the Germans in South West Africa, developing the (originally British) concept of the concentration camp. It is not unrelieved barbarism from the conquerors: in the course of evangelistic zeal, the British "Conciliator" in Tasmania, George Robinson, carefully learned the ways of the indigenous population before seeking to baptise them.

RIVERS OF BLOOD. RIVERS OF GOLD
by Mark Cocker
Cape £20, 416 pages

More damage to tribal populations was done by the unintentional spread of European urban diseases than by machine-guns. And in his concluding remarks Cocker admits that tribal societies were (and are) quite capable of doing serious damage amongst themselves without any intrusion from the technocratic Europeans, witness Rwanda.

But reducing this tale to a straight transition "from Eden to Armageddon" begs too many questions. Cocker mentions the Yanomami Indians of Brazil, "endlessly reproduced by the conservation community both as an eloquent reproach against environmental destruction... and as an icon symbolising sustainable use of such resources." He does not, however, tackle the liberal dilemma notoriously posed by the Yanomami.

Ever since 1967, when Napoleon Chagnon published his anthropological study of their ritualistic ferocity, the Yanomami have demonstrated a Hobbesian paradigm of the state of nature in which the life of man is not blissfully Utopian, but short and brutal. Of course the chest-pounding, head-hunting and wife-beating of the Yanomami has its apologists. But by what enlightened logic does "the west" declare war upon a regime deemed "brutal", such as Saddam Hussein's, while making a precious exclusive of the Yanomami?

Europeans historically encountering tribal peoples perceived "faults" with a priggishness now easy enough to mock and deconstruct. The accusation of native laziness, for example, carried with it not only the values of the Calvinistic work-ethic, but also a convenient justification for seizure of property. But if we regard the destruction of Montezuma's Mexico as mere greed glossed as monotheistic redemption, we overlook moral nuances perfectly evident to conscientious witnesses of the time, such as Bartolome de Las Casas. Did the Mexicans have self-contained rights to practise human sacrifice? Did intolerance allow equal cruelty in its repression?

These are the awful birth-pangs of the global village.

As Gribbin tells us, that Feynman's Lagrangian path integrals are a much better way into the subtleties of the quantum world than the Hamiltonian functions of Schrödinger's original wave mechanics, but we still have no idea why.

In truth, I don't quite see who would want to own this book when there are so many accounts of particle physics - a number of them by Gribbin himself - which are not broken up into hundreds of small bites and put in alphabetical order. Perhaps it might be useful as an adjunct to a more straightforward popular book on the subject, so that lapses into obscurity can be cured by referring to Gribbin for a quick explanation of the particular point which is proving elusive. A physics student who is struggling with

the maths and wants a topic-based guide to get some idea what is supposed to be going on might also benefit. And science writers whose physics is weak will find it a good crib, as well.

If all of them add up to an audience for a non-mathematical encyclopedia of modern physics, they will all be reasonably well-served. Certainly, there is little left out. Beyond quantum mechanics, the book incorporates all the further developments in particle physics, which has uncovered still more elusive entities than the photons and electrons which were the first pillars of quantum theory. The quarks, which appear to give neutrons and protons an internal structure are here, and so are the multidimensional superstrings which may in theory unify a whole of fundamental physics.

The latter, the subject of the longest piece in the whole book, still strike me as entirely incomprehensible to the non-initiate (and I could once solve the simplest of Schrödinger's equations), though Gribbin is evidently very keen on them.

Along with these exotics, there are a myriad shorter items, on everything from atoms to Z-particles, dutiful but dull capsule biographies of just about every physicist who has ever solved an equation, and 100-odd pages of chronologies. Gribbin sticks to the science, ignoring all the fluffy commentaries of the "quantum society" kind, though this does mean there is little light relief. The whole thing is certainly comprehensive enough to satisfy any train-spotter who grew up to be a physicist, and is accurate, and up to date. But the fact that the job is well done still leaves this reader puzzled why it was done at all. No matter how much you stuff into a popular book on this subject, it will never be a substitute for a maths course.

Q IS FOR QUANTUM: PARTICLE PHYSICS FROM A TO Z
by John Gribbin
Weidenfeld & Nicolson £25, 545 pages

the fashion of George Gornow or, more recently, the British physicist Russell Stannard with his children's stories about Uncle Albert and his niece Gedemmen.

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A glimpse of the global village: this picture of a young Yanomami Indian from Brazil is one of 120 colour photographs by Art Wolfe in his celebration of native cultures, "Tribes" (Thomas & Hudson £24, 160 pages). Among the 15 groups pictured are the Ethiopian Hamar, the Karenese Mende and the Lisu of Northern Thailand. Inset, the Somali former model, has written a preface to the book.

Drama of life

The setting is Georgia, 1914. Leo Frank is Jewish. He is a thoughtful, married man. He goes to work one Saturday and, later that day, a white girl who works in his factory is found raped and murdered. Leo is arrested, tried and sentenced for the crime. After serving some time in prison, he is abducted and lynched by a mob.

David Mamet is reported to have been obsessed with the true story of Leo Frank for some time. It is easy to see why. *The Old Religion* combines two perennial Mamet themes - what it is to be Jewish and what it means to be a "man".

Leo Frank is fundamentally uncertain of both. Like many of Mamet's stage characters, Frank verbally creates a space for his masculinity, which he then moves in and out of. His identity as a Jew is not clear to him. He takes questions about both the material and immaterial and scrutinises them to death, but he is unattractively self-conscious in his efforts and applauds himself on his "fervor of rectitude".

When Mary is found dead, nothing can prepare Frank for the vehemence with

which the "Christians" have presumed his guilt. The trial itself is treated perfunctorily; everyone, including Frank, knows the jury's verdict is a foregone conclusion, but even this is seen by Frank as an "initiation" to discover his "manhood".

In jail, he learns Hebrew - a "passport to another land" and finds a space, as a Jewish man, which affords him greater security. By the time he is about to be hanged, his only concern is to ensure the return of his wedding ring to his wife.

Mamet's prose has its usual staccato delivery. He breaks up sentences and starts new paragraphs in the oddest ways, trying to capture the overlapping, conflicting patterns of speech and thought. The language is peppered with archaisms, sermons and the kind of aphorisms that only an autodidact would use.

Despite touching on them, Mamet never opens the story out to tackle overt themes of racism, preferring instead to stay with Frank's point of view. The resulting interiority can, at times, seem suffocating but is alleviated by the elliptical rush of the chapters. *The Old Religion* is ultimately a rewarding and curiously uplifting book.

True and False is another of Mamet's collections of polemical essays, following on from the magnificent *On Directing Film*, published in 1991. This time round, he attacks the business of acting. Like its predecessor, it is stimulating, corrosive and ardent. Like *The Old Religion*, it is full of aphorisms, but ones that are the obvious product of years spent as an actor.

Mamet situates himself strongly against the "Method" and any system which purports to "teach" actors how to act. To have to remember how you felt when your puppy died before you can act out a "goodbye" scene is the "ultimate self-consciousness", according to Mamet. "Great drama is not the performance of deeds with great emotion, but the performance of great deeds with no emotion whatever."

Mamet's peculiar attraction is built on a solid understanding of the mechanics of acting, but isn't restricted to acting alone. Like Kundera's *The Art of the Novel*, Ezra Pound's notes on writing poetry and Aristotle's *Poetics*, Mamet's collection can apply to those from all walks of life interested in ways of living. So, in the office, or talking to your parents, just remember that "What comes from the heart goes to the heart."

THE OLD RELIGION
by David Mamet
Faber & Faber £9.99, 194 pages

TRUE AND FALSE
by David Mamet
Faber & Faber £9.99, 127 pages

Richard Skinner



Sylvia Townsend Warner: although she died in 1978, this is the first publication of her letters

Cod poetics and the lives of a tangled threesome

These letters do little for the writer's reputation, argues Ann Geneva

Although Sylvia Townsend Warner was celebrated in her day, most people now find themselves hard-pressed to remember her books. Like Vita Sackville-West, her long-term lesbian "marriage" to Valentine Ackland, is more often alluded to than her works cited.

Born in 1893 to the wife of the headmaster of Harrow School, Sylvia received no formal education. During the first world war she worked in a munitions factory, and it was not until the mid-1930s when her first two published novels - *Lolly Willowes* and *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* - were instant successes that she gained any literary reputation.

Sylvia met Valentine, who was then 24, in 1930, and they remained together for almost 40 years. When separated, they often wrote more than one letter a day, yielding a total of some 400,000 words. Although Sylvia intended the letters to be published in their entirety, Suzanne Pinney, who began working for Sylvia in 1970 shortly after Valentine's death, has trimmed them by almost two thirds. Pinney notes that Sylvia added a linking narrative and sent the typescript to the Berg

collection in New York, with instructions it should not be published until after the death of certain named persons. Thus, although Sylvia died in 1978, this is the first publication of the letters. Sketching the prose from Sackville-West and Violet Trefusis, whose husband burned Vita's letters, this collection is heralded by its publisher as "the most detailed personal account of a lesbian relationship, this century".

Sylvia and Valentine both grew up in privileged surroundings. When they pooled possessions for their first Dorset cottage, we hear of "the tall candlesticks, her Regency coffee-spoons, my egg-shell porcelain coffee cups". These and other tall-mans enabled them to declare "against the grained carrot, folk-pottery way of life". Yet these petty snobberies and a life filled with

celebrities such as Benjamin Britten, Stephen Spender and Cecil Day Lewis, were often belied by their actions and circumstances.

For example, after a debilitating lawsuit they rented dilapidated houses, grew their own food, later even using part of the house as an antique shop. Describing one dwelling Sylvia writes: "It had no lighting, no sanitation, no damp-course, and eight dead rats were dredged from its well... For the first two years we lived at full stretch and light-heartedly, admiring each other's devices, damming rural landlordism and sometimes remembering to boil our drinking water... Our books, our clothes, all our belongings, were misleading and deteriorating. So were we."

More controversially, in the mid-1930s they joined the Communist Party of Great Britain. This led, in turn to involvement with the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War, and their attendance as part of a "depressingly puny and undistinguished British Delegation" at the International Congress of Writers in Madrid in 1937. Sylvia noted "much of the fighting was so near that people dusty from the battlefield came to address us".

The bulk of these letters, however, are taken up with the expression and description of their personal relationship, which, despite their protestations, followed the usual trajectory from intense to companionable. For many years, however, Valentine was also in thrall to a wealthy, sulky American woman, Elizabeth, who tortured her feelings which, in turn, tortured Sylvia's. Their apologies and teeth-grittings make depressing reading.

"Far from circumventing the clichés of heterosexual liaisons, their attempt to form a civilised triangle ended in a tangle. Sylvia described what she overheard, lying in the single bed of the guest room next door. "Elizabeth would begin to talk. She talked with perfect coherence, as the monomaniac does. I tried not to hear what she was saying, but I could not escape her voice. I went on and on, railing, reproaching, analysing, accusing." For her part Valentine wrote to Sylvia, "I cannot think it is wrong to want to lie with Elizabeth - except that it hurts you so much. I did not know it would do that." Would any male have been more obtuse?

The book's publishers

maintain these letters will confirm Sylvia Townsend Warner as "one of the most important British writers of the century". Alas, such hopes are dashed by the cod poetic and forced nature of her lyric flights of prose. Surprisingly, Valentine comes across on paper as

altogether more genuine and spontaneous, possessing the truculent transparency of someone more comfortable with physical activity than writing.

The editor has added almost nothing to Sylvia's notes and a much greater explanatory apparatus is

needed for the modern reader, both concerning Sylvia and Valentine's lives and identifying others mentioned in their texts. And at such a high price, not including a single picture, even on the jacket, seems unnecessarily mean, even in today's straitened world of publishing.

I'LL STAND BY YOU: THE LETTERS OF SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER & VALENTINE ACKLAND
edited by Suzanne Pinney
Pimlico £15, 392 pages

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BOOKS

Fatally flawed poetry of emotion

Housman's work is drenched with tragic ironies but airbrushed of all awkward reality and intellectual integrity, argues Craig Raine

In 1972, reviewing Housman's correspondence, W.H. Auden was frankly pleased by the snub to posterity's insatiable prurience. The bawdy letters to Arthur Platt had been destroyed by his widow. No letters survived of those written to Moses Jackson, the (heterosexual) love of Housman's life. Auden's delight in the dullness of the remainder was clearly self-interested. He had already instructed his friends to destroy his own letters. And yet, in the same review, Auden speculated that Housman's sexual tastes were probably "anal passive". The contradiction here, between the protective impulse and intrusive instinct, mirrors the contradictions, fissures and fault-lines in Housman's life and work. Housman wanted us to believe that the poet was one thing and that the scholar was another. Poetry was emotion. Textual criticism was devoid of anything but dry ratiocination. But nothing is as neat as it appears to be. Housman's psychic apartheid impoverishes the scholarship, and fatally flaws his poetry.

Contradictions, implications are, of course, everywhere in Housman. Even as he enforced the strictest demarcations. He died in 1936, so it shouldn't be as surprising as it seems that he flew in an aeroplane. "The noise is great and I alighted rather deaf, not having stuffed my ears with the cotton-wool provided. Nor did I put on the life-belt which they oblige one to take..." This intrepidity, bluff and unbending though it is, sits oddly with the poetry, the modernity of the aircraft scarcely compatible with the archaic, stylised pastoral of *A Shropshire Lad*: "And blithe as if to ploughing/Against the morning beam/I strode beside my

team..." And the pastoral itself is fractured: it is bitter and unhappy, "the land of lost content", drenched with tragic ironies, but curiously depleted of anything but timeless details and airbrushed of all emotional complication. Even in 1906, the language had an antique patina. It was aurally distressed. Housman's poetry is profoundly anti-modernist, which may account for the nature of its popularity. Housman isn't a poet's poet. He is the people's poet, carried, according to John Spar-

row in 1966, in knapsacks, along with Fitzgerald's translations of Omar Khayyam.

Modernism, as practised by Eliot, Lawrence, Yeats and Auden, embraced the intellectual which Housman rejected. More importantly still, the great modernists were committed to the scrutiny of emotions which Housman's poetry embraces so unquestioningly. What passes for current and valid there is likely to be rumpled as a forgery by the alert, sceptical modernist. Impunity, mixed feelings, impacted emotional contradiction, self-dividedness are characteristic of modernism's greater truthfulness. In a note to his *New Year Letter* or *The Double Man* (in America, significantly enough), Auden is a spokesman for the new complication: "The Devil, indeed, is the father of Poetry, for poetry might be defined as the clear expression of mixed feelings." Or take Yeats in "Meditations in Time of Civil War", where he is compelled to count the

baby moorhens in order "to silence the envy in [his] blood" for the Falstaffian warrior - and where he equally prays for peace, even as he envies the man of action. In Housman, emotions are pure, powerful and fatally literary.

Take "Farewell to barn and stack and tree", his poem of fratricide - in which the cause of the quarrel, the murderer's justification or lack of justification have been edited out by Housman - in the interest of simplified pathos. Protagonist and reader alike can indulge the sentiment of loss, since the murderer must take his leave of the familiar landscape and friends forever. Regret, guilt, the mother's anguish for her dead son, remorse are all eliminated from the picture, the better to savour self-pity: "Long for me the rick will wait, And long will wait the fold, And long will stand the empty plate, And dinner will be cold." Not a whisper of irony or intelligence, merely the swash of poignancy unearned. And the flat bump of bathos in that cold dinner. For this, the murder is only a pretext.

Housman was once visited by Clarence Darrow, an American barrister who specialised in defending murderers. "He could not return home without seeing me," Housman wrote, "because he had so often used my poems to rescue his clients from the electric chair." Darrow gave Housman a copy of one of his speeches for the defence - "in which, sure enough, two of my pieces are misquoted." For Housman, the irony is directed solely against Darrow. The misquotations acquit Housman of any culpable complicity. But the anecdote implicitly indicts Housman's sentimentality - his reflex sympathy for his automatic underdogs.

"There sleeps in Shrewsbury jail tonight/Or wakes, as may betide, A better lad, if things went right, Than most that sleep outside." Tell it to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, one is tempted to rejoice. Except that there is something absurd about an appeal to reality when one is dealing with Housman's never-never-land - an ersatz world of arch simplicities, a world where awkward realities are smartly avoided.

Death, for instance. That may seem an odd criticism of Housman, whose poetry is abrim with mortality and yearning for the grave. Strange to say, however, Housman's characteristic way with death is periphrastic: "the far dwelling"; "My love rose up so early / And stole out unbeknown / And went to church alone"; "Ere to a town you journey / Where friends are ill to find"; "Soldier, sit you down and idle / At the inn of night for aye"; "The pale, the perished nation / That never sees the sun". The list could be a lot longer. Each example will pass individually, but taken together the trope is facile, almost automatic and dangerously cognate with undertaker's grave-stone euphemisms. The real unpleasantness, the ugly, the grotesque has been politely poetised. No wonder Housman complained that "Virgil's besetting sin is the use of words too forcible for his thoughts."

There is something sanitised about even the best of Housman - which may perhaps account for his enduring popularity. Mr Beebe, the repressed clergyman in Forster's *A Room with a View* (1906), is implicitly condemned when he says: "A *Shropshire Lad*. Never heard of it." The book is clearly a secret touchstone for Forster - but, then, whenever Forster invokes "poetry" in his

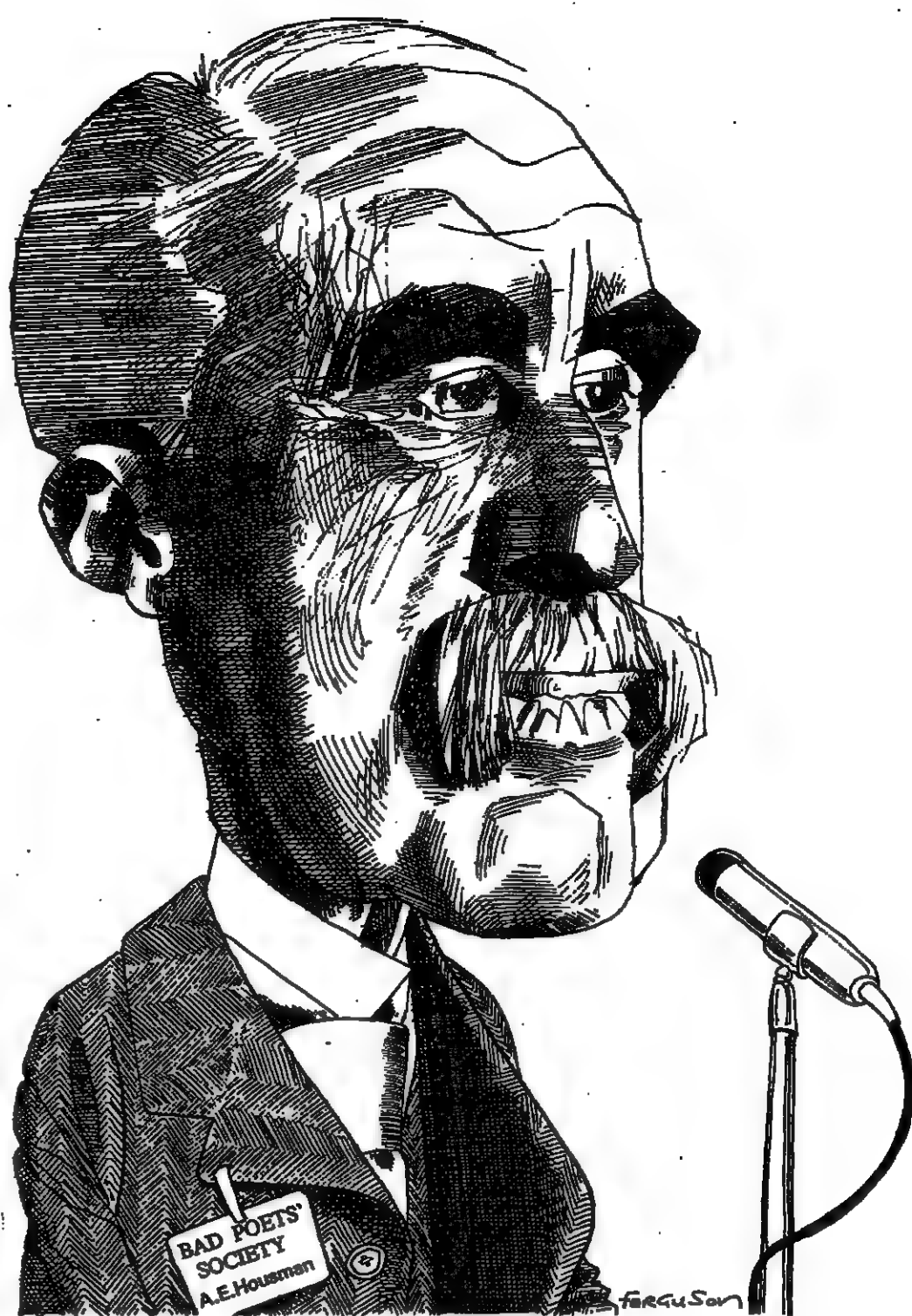
fiction, he invariably means something exalted and simplified. Housman wanted to be very popular, to bypass the intelligentsia and get straight to the box office, though not for mercenary reasons. "Vanity, not avarice, is my ruling passion; and so long as young men write to me from America saying that they would rather part with their hair than with their copy of my book, I do not feel the need of food or drink." When his publisher, Grant Richards, doubled the price of *A Shropshire Lad*, Housman pointed out that sales would be diminished. Moreover, the occurrence of a certain circumstance was rendered less likely: "a soldier is to receive a bullet in the breast, and it is to be turned aside from his heart by a copy of *A Shropshire Lad* which he is carrying there. Hitherto it is only the Bible that has performed this trick." It is a telling sally - at once waggish, self-ironising, deprecatory and ingenuously enough

under the comic hyperbole. It is also only a whisker away from the romantic world of the poetry, where reality is sufficiently impressionistic to relax the laws of strict plausibility. Housman reserved his intellect for textual criticism - making scholarship an area where emotion was *strictly verboten*. He rejected the emotional content of the texts he scrutinised. Except, of course, that he couldn't completely effect this separation of function, of response, as Archie Burnett's definitive and profoundly helpful commentary shows. In May 1914, Housman shocked his lecture audience by considering his favourite Horace ode "simply as poetry". They were accustomed to an analytic process closer to vivisection, a display of brutal intellect and bravura sarcasmic wit. "He read the ode aloud with deep emotion, first in Latin and then in an English translation of his own." Pronouncing it, "the most beautiful poem in

ancient literature", Housman more or less fled the room. The anecdote appeals to us because it demonstrates the power of emotion, its resistless force. Yet, just as the scholarship needs to take proper cognisance of emotion, so the poetry needs to apply intellect to the easy emotions which are its trademark.

Burnett's commentary demonstrates how much Housman's language trades on reminiscence - of the Bible, Tennyson, Keats, classical literature. It could hardly be bettered, though what it tells us about Housman's decision is ultimately critical. There are two unfortunate misprints in the main text. "The Welsh Marches" prints "The war the sleeps on Severn side" for "The war that sleeps on Severn side", and in "Be still, my soul, be still" the inverted commas of the opening are never closed. Archie Burnett will

be irritated but neither mistake is crucial because they are so obviously mistakes. No one will be misled by either. Now and again, Burnett's commentary emulates the laconic asperity of Housman: George Watson, Richard Percival Graves and John Bayley all venture biographically based interpretations of "Parta Quies". Burnett dispatches them thus: "all these interpretations lack a foundation." The job has been done well. In the meantime, what accounts for the durability of this minor poet? Maybe Milton Kundera is right in his play, *Jacques and His Master*: "You are the great Diderot, I am a bad poet... All of mankind consists of bad poets! The bad poets who make up mankind are crazy about bad verse! Indeed, it is just because I write bad verse that I shall one day be in the pantheon of great poets!" Housman's poetry speaks to the bad poet in all of us.



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FINANCIAL TIMES

No FT, no comment.

Britannia cools down

Anthony Everitt deciphers the word from Whitehall on the arts

When cabinet ministers write something down and publish it, a native caution compels them to deploy an unusual prose style. It must give all the appearance of meaning while conveying as little of it as possible. Chris Smith, the culture secretary, produces perfectly sensible, readable sentences, but if you pause for a moment to scrutinise one of them, you feel as if you are using a magnifying glass which someone has coated with glycerine.

This maddeningly soft-focus book is a collection of his speeches, topped and tailed by a couple of essays that cover much the same ground as the speeches themselves. It is hard to see who without a specialist interest would find it useful. And yet. And yet. There are some very good policies set out here, and those with the skill to read between the lines will learn a good deal about the government's intentions for culture and the arts.

The most fact-filled part of *Creative Britain* is the appendix, which gives an economic "map" of the creative industries. In every area of the arts and design, it tells a success story with quite substantial estimates of growth over the next 10 years. Chris Smith is at his most convincing when he outlines, often in some detail, his thinking on (say) the needs of the British film industry, or the urgency of reforming copyright laws to

meet the demands of the new electronic technologies. Thankfully, he also knocks the banalities of Cool Britannia on the head.

But the secretary of state has little to say about the future of the "high", or as

CREATIVE BRITAIN
by Chris Smith

Faber & Faber £7.99, 170 pages

Raymond Williams used to call them the "old" arts. Most knowledgeable observers know that the present system of permanent deficit funding for opera companies, theatres and the like needs overhaul, but no evidence of new thinking on this front appears in these pages.

There is, however, a much more scandalous omission. While Chris Smith talks of the arts and social regeneration, he pays practically no attention to the amateur or "voluntary" arts. It is as if the millions (and I mean millions) of people who sing in choirs, play in brass bands or rock groups, act in plays and rediscover the traditional or folk arts of these islands did not exist. They contribute as much to our national creativity as the professionals - and, indeed, there is increasing evidence of collaboration across the pro-am divide. If they do not qualify as citizens of "creative Britain", who does?

Interestingly, an alternative to this book exists, which gives a much sharper idea of what the government is up to on the cultural front. And it doesn't cost a

penny. One of Mr Smith's smartest tricks has been to set up a creative industries task force whose members include ministers from other leading departments of state and such external worthies as David Puttnam, Richard Branson and Paul Smith. Almost its first decision was to make the minutes of its meetings publicly available. These turn out to be full of the bright wheezes and no-nonsense analysis (admittedly, in abbreviated form) that would have enlivened *Creative Britain*. The word in Whitehall is that it is one of the most popular and

lively committees in a world where, as a rule, ministries share as little as possible with each other, especially their thinking.

So all those bothered luvvies who have so noisily turned coat in recent months may soon have to eat their self-interested words. In the corridors of power, culture is silently moving centre-stage and Mr Smith, who in his first few months in office seemed butter-fingered and not long for this world, is turning out to be one of New Labour's genuine innovators.

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Pick of the Week

Peter's Journey by Maurice Scott £7.95
One of Britain's leading economists, Maurice Scott, poses the age old insoluble - "what is the purpose of life" - and sets about attaining an answer as he follows the young graduate, Peter, accompanied by the Spirit of Truth, through an accessible and balanced review of the theories by which we live. "Entrancing" Martin Wolff, *Financial Times*.

FINANCIAL TIMES

No FT, no comment.

ARTS

The Old Masters can spring surprises with the best of them. There are always painters, indeed, whole schools, that have been long forgotten. When at last they are dragged back into the light, we all say: how is it possible such wonderful things could ever have been so disregarded? The stories of masterpieces sold on unrecognised for the price of the frame, bought on a hunch and sold for a fortune, are as familiar as they are salutary. A while ago it was the Victorians and before that, Art Nouveau. More recently it has been the 17th century, and in particular the early Italian Baroque, post-Caravaggio, with Guercino and Guido Reni the heroes, as paintings from the Sir Denis Mahon collection exhibited at the National Gallery last year made so spectacularly clear. From the 1930s to the '70s, Sir Denis had the field to himself and put together, for a song, a collection we now know to be of the highest museum quality which no single museum can match.

His show also made the point that the Baroque in Italy was no parochial affair, but pan-European. A great international "Caravaggisti" show, from Guercino to Valentin and Ribera, Ter Brugghen and De la Tour, would perhaps be a blockbuster too far, but with its present show of the work of the Utrecht school of painters from the 1600s to the 1650s, the National Gallery half takes the point. It is as spectacular as it is unexpected. The title is a shade misleading, with its talk of light and a golden age, hints of landscape and the rural or domestic idyll. What it does not do is prepare us for the direct, sometimes even shocking physicality of the work, that brings us so close to the subject with an uncomfortable realism, no matter that the imagery might be that of the most high-minded religious or classical morality.

St Peter shrinks before the challenging, questioning gaze of Van Honthorst's handsome serving girl. Ter Brugghen gives us the very blood-ripping from the wound as St Irenaeus the arrow from St Sebastian's side. And we shrink too from the generous daughter, Pero, disquietingly giving the breast to her imprisoned and starving father, Cimón, in Van Baburen's allegory of Roman Charity.

But why Utrecht? Of the cities of the newly-independent Dutch Republic, Utrecht, though capital of its province, was small, inland, and of little mercantile importance. But in 1627, it was first port of call for that greatest of Baroque painters, Rubens, when on a covert diplomatic mission from the southern, still-Spanish Netherlands. And he can only have gone there for his painting. For, counter to official policies, Utrecht remained substantially Catholic, at least in private sympathy. Its artists had all studied and worked in Rome,



Andromeda, lightly chained to her rock as Perseus sails overhead to slay the dragon: painted by the discovery of the show, Joachim Wtewael

Unexpected Dutch treats

William Packer hails the imagery and realism of the 17th century Utrecht artists

and the city was thus a direct conduit to northern Europe for the latest Roman practice. This explains both Rubens's personal interest and the open celebration of Catholic and Classical imagery, sacred and profane, in a nominally Protestant state. What we find in this exhibition is not just the Italianate sympathies of the Utrecht school, but the transition in influence from the extravagant Mannerism of the earlier painters, such as

Bloemart and Wtewael, to the Caravaggesque realism, set into modern life, of Van Honthorst and Ter Brugghen. The show is arranged thematically, room by room, with Mannerism first, but the chronology generally implicit — scenes from modern life followed by works founded upon classical, religious and literary subjects, rounded off by landscape and still-life.

Ter Brugghen and Van Honthorst are the obvious

stars, and rightly so; it is hardly credible that only 30 years ago even their major works were to be had for the asking. Their work has not quite the authority of Caravaggio or the facility of Valentin, but it has a directness and honesty that is entirely persuasive, all so natural and studied in the observation, and so competent in the statement. There is no image in the show more touching than Ter Brugghen's great Annunciation, at once intimate and theatrical, devout in its realism.

But the surprise, indeed the discovery to all but the specialist, must be the Mannerist paintings of Jochem Wtewael, whether on the largest or the smallest scale — Venus willing in the arms of Mars (and vice versa) on a tiny panel, or, rather larger, the delicately blushing Andromeda, so lightly chained to her rock as Perseus sails overhead to slay

the dragon. Best of all is his remarkable kitchen maid, so powerful yet delicate in her skewering of the fowl, with only a glimpse of Christ, tiny in the room beyond, with Mary and Martha, to give it an ostensible morality.

Paintings of Light — Dutch Paintings from Utrecht in the Golden Age: The National Gallery, London WC2, until August 2; sponsored by SBC Warburg Dillon Read.

Television/Christopher Dunkley

Insight into body and soul

BCI's seven part series *The Human Body* which started on Wednesday is one of those things which nobody is expected to question. Who wants to be considered an obscurantist? Who would be willing to say they did not want to know all about the wonders of the human body and why we are the way we are? Could you possibly pass up the chance to slip in through the ear and check out those teeny little bones that enable you to hear, the malleus, incus and stapes (though words like that are a bit technical, so don't expect to hear them)?

Could you really say no to watching the conjunction of sperm and egg and thus the very beginning of a new life in next Wednesday's programme? The Watsons of Bath sportingly allow the cameras in — and I mean in — and no doubt other couples expecting children will be fascinated by all the detail. Yet some of us find a little bit of this stuff goes a long way. My notes are indistinct so I am not sure whether we blink 450 million times in our lives or 4,500 million times, but does it really matter?

My impression, contrary to the excited promotion material, is that television has been allowing us to explore arteries and windpipes thanks to miniature cameras and fibre optics for some years now. I remember seeing very detailed pictures from the most intimate interstices of a pregnant woman several years ago at one of the major European television festivals, while watching a Swedish documentary which won several prizes. Probably what happens is that each successive programme of this sort breaks another barrier. This time we are promised a brain cell firing an electrical impulse, and assured that this particular marvel has not been seen on screen before.

But the prospect of seven hours slithering about inside the body is a bit daunting. Perhaps it is an indication that the famous division between the two cultures remains as wide as ever, since a programme about the life of one individual seems to me considerably more tempting.

Television biography has improved greatly over the last four or five years, and although there have been complaints about "character assassination", they have tended to come from people who wanted to preserve a fond lie rather than face the truth. Series such as *Reputations* on BBC2, however, have really not moved on so very dramatically from the last great change in biography, which occurred with

Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*: and that, remember, came out in 1918.

Last week's reputation was that of Jacques Cousteau, a man with twin claims to fame: he co-invented the aqualung, thus making scuba diving possible and, with the series *The Undersea World*, established underwater photography as a specialised but widespread 20th-century passion. The start of the programme hinted at more dramatic revelations than were actually delivered: "a ruthless manipulator... betrayal... he used people..." Very little of John Farron's conventional and largely benign biography was actually concerned with such matters. Cousteau's colleagues seem to have idolised him, and his life appears to have been a sequence of huge successes. The revelations were that he used a shark cage to imply a danger which did not really exist (wow), liked to hog the limelight (gosh), and had a long-term mistress by whom he had two children. He was, in other words, a decidedly conventional middle class Frenchman.

The subject in the same series this coming Monday, comedian Kenneth Williams, was clearly more odd, and more difficult to get on with — though, like Cousteau, he spent a lot of his life in front of the cameras. This makes him an ideal choice since he is well known to viewers and has left a handy stockpile of material for programme-making purposes. Thanks to the publication of his extraordinary diaries and other material since his death, many people will already know about his bizarre double life, creating so much laughter in public and then going home to his stark flat to write sad and bitter diatribes about so many of his acquaintances, but above all about himself.

What makes this programme by Liz Hartford (the first of two about Williams) so powerful is the material contributed by his friends. They clearly knew, to some extent at least, about the way he agonised over his homosexuality, his hatred of his father, the pernickety manner in which he ring-fenced his living quarters (friends weren't allowed to use his lavatory, they had to go down to Baker Street tube station) and his awful professional jealousies. Yet, as this programme so vividly reveals, they still admired and often loved him. The contributions from Sheila Hancock and Maggie Smith are eye-opening. On the whole television is better off opening eyes than opening veins.

We heard on Monday's *You and Yours* that "people were not happy with the making good of holes", a social injustice of Dickensian proportions and one for which Britain recently hung her head in shame in the international community. Hence the course in digging holes you can now take at the City and Guilds — holes perfected with a two-year guarantee.

Why not? In an era when fashion, software design and food all come within the remit of Britain's cultural supremacy, the ability to dig a cool hole must rank high in our national accomplishments. No wonder M. Chirac looked unfavourably pained at the recent exercise in holiday-camp jollity hosted by chief resident Blair: he was jealous of Cool Britannia's latest insouciant superiority over the French: digging holes that remain holes for at least two years. Ah, the note of envy in those bitter Gallic references to "ce trou anglais".

If hole-digging has become an academic discipline, can it be long before it is an art? And therefore, according to Chris Smith, our inimitable man in charge of culture, an industry? It was the same slightly hallucinatory Monday that brought this esoteric to Radio 4's *Front Row*. Smith has just come out.

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Radio/Martin Hoyle

Cool holes in our culture

with a book approximately related to the arts, or rather the arts industry (see Books, page V1). The jacket design by Damien Hirst is pretty and indeed the main reason for buying the volume, the minister's old speeches modestly bundled together in a job lot for a wider public than the privileged few who first enjoyed them.

The word "industry" tends to be appended to art-forms in a knee-jerk way, as if Smith were afraid of acknowledging art for its own sake. The new Gradgrind's views on the "pains of creation" (Chris is right up there with Flaubert and his "affaires du style", his own style is pretty *affreux*) emerged as apparently utilitarian, at least during the programme's discussion. The arts are good for promoting Britain's exports, her image, social engineering as regards the excluded (a group New Labour is concerned about), and one which is about to include a whopping number of Britain's creative artists), and — most sinister — to "support public policy": an artistic credo unheard in civilised countries since the demise of Stalinism.

It is also ironic to note that among last week's radio highlights was the playing of a British orchestra that enjoys a base in Paris. The Philharmonia's "Clocks and

Clouds" series, in Radio 3's admirable *Sounding the Century* strand, is a matter for greater national pride than even the Gallaghers, almost as sublime as Sir Terence Comran.

The orchestra has won a Royal Philharmonic Society award for this cycle of the music of Ligeti, a cool Hungarian based in cool Hamburg and pretty big in the music industry, together with another award for his cool young conductor, Esa-Pekka Salonen, who is as prettily photogenic as any New Labour spin doctor could wish.

The band is much admired abroad, hence its Paris residency at a time when most British orchestras in the classical industry are fighting in the survival industry. Since the embattled Radio 3 comes in for such stick in the opinion industry, it is only right that it gets its fair share in the praise industry for magnificent concerts. There is something of brainwashing in Radio 4's adoption of television leftovers. There is a story about a young opera singer who would spit in a corner before he went on stage. When asked why, he replied that the great Chaliapin had always done so. I am reminded of the anecdote

every time I hear *Mastermind* on radio. The portentous music and ominous thumps that on television covered the candidate's walk to the chair of interrogation have been bafflingly retained on radio. God knows why. It is famously irrelevant, wastes time and sounds insane. And of course it remains incomprehensible to those who have never watched *Mastermind* on television, though James Boyle may swoon at the unpalatable allegation that there are some people (who needs TV's rivalry when radio has controllers like Boyle?).

Radio 4's *Unholy Relics*, dealing with the peripatetic fate of "famously warty" Oliver Cromwell's head, sounded for much of the time like a school's broadcast, except that a school's broadcast would presumably have got the date of Charles II's death right.

To death and taxes one must add weather when the great eternal verities. Radio 4's *Strange Weather Days* proves yet again that ordinary people (ie non-celebs or in their own words, still provide the most fascinating material. Memories of the East Anglian floods of 1953 were totally gripping as recounted by the local policeman and the press photographer whose colleagues thought he was "bloody mad" flying low over the floods to take pictures. Nearly half a century later he broke down as he recalled "an old gentleman" holding a baby while clinging to a chimney, then being swept away. I don't think he saw himself as a cool exponent of the photography industry, just a human being.

Theatre/Sarah Hemming

Flexible with the truth

For a former barrister to become a playwright makes a certain sense. After all, both disciplines require their practitioners to stand up before an audience and convince with their performance; both disciplines invite passionate rhetoric and skilled deployment of language. Indeed, it is just this area of flexible truth-telling that barrister-turned-playwright Peter Moffat explores in his sparkling, though slender, new play, *Nabokov's Gloves*.

His central character, Nick, is a successful barrister, used to moulding the truth to defend the guilty as well as the innocent. Slick, handsome and charming, he is expert at getting "the relevant essence" across, and half in love with his own credibility. His complacency is blown away, however, when he falls in love with a client — a small-time drugs dealer with a tragic childhood.

Captivated by this damaged butterfly, with her wife-like fragility and painful stories of her brutal father, Nick becomes besotted, and thrilled at the fact that he has stripped away pretence and is involved "heart and soul" with a difficult case. But is he in love with her, with her tragic life, or with himself as the hero who can rescue her? As Nick

pursues her, against the advice of his colleagues and to the suspicion of his shrewd doctor wife, Moffat works up a tangle of ethical questions.

It is a witty and agile play. Moffat has a ball evoking a smart lawyers' world, where barristers and clerks insult each other with impunity. And, as befits a play that is concerned with language as the currency of truth, it is skilfully and playfully written. The downside of this is that it can be too sharp and pat for its own good; and, in the end, style wins over content. The play reveals considerably less than it promises about relationships, truth or morality.

It is absorbing to watch performance as the colleague who is plagued by conscience, and Liam Brown's admirable work shows wonders with her one-note character as the angry wife who craves honesty in Nick's slippery world of half-truths. David Cardy and Beattie Edney are enjoyably funny as the adulterous clerk and bumsome barrister who have come to a working compromise with their own principles. There's plenty of wit and energy here, but in the end, not much for the jury to chew on once all the talking is done.

Greg Wise is wonderfully plausible as Nick, perfect at the puppydog-eyes-through-the-fringe routine beloved of men who know they are boyishly handsome, and infuriating in his self-congratulatory infatuation. Dominic



Wonderfully plausible: Greg Wise and Niamh Cusack

Nabokov's Gloves, Hampstead Theatre, London NW3.

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ARTS

High art and low motive fight it out

Nigel Andrews finds every taboo biting the Côte d'Azur dust at this year's controversial Cannes Film Festival

Absurdism is the movie flavour of the 51st Cannes Film Festival. And what other style or mood could possibly suit the event?

Dignity and indignity, high art and low motive, have fought it out almost every night. This is a festival where the length of movie queues has been dictated less by filmic merit than by the censorship palavers stirred up by, say, Lars Von Trier's *Idiot's* or Todd Solondz's *Happiness*. This is a festival in which cinemagoers had no sooner commemorated a great crooner's death - with a Sinatra song played over the speakers followed by a brief respectful silence - than a completely barney Taiwanese film unspooled full of Hollywood-spoofing musical numbers. (For details read on.) And on one night of torrential rain, only Fellini could have done justice to the dinner jackets and Givenchy dresses blown about and bedrenched by the irreverent elements.

Sometimes, though, the sublime and ridiculous are synonymous, or at least symbiotic. *Idiot's* is the film all Cannes was waiting for, mainly because it has thrown Danish censors for a loop with its brief close-up of penetrative sex. Those who came to ogle, however, stayed to marvel. The orgy scene is merely one jaw-dropper in a spectacularly unnerving comedy from Denmark's top enfant terrible.

A group of commune-dwelling friends masquerade as mental retardards, going out into streets, restaurants or public places to embarrass the citizenry. Film-maker Trier doesn't condemn or condone. We must decide if this is cruel recreational mockery or a real attempt by the friends, as one puts it, "to get in touch with their inner idiots."

The film is never funny without being shocking and never shocking without being thought-

provoking. The mood-swings are dazzling: we cut in an instant from custard-pie farce to social horror, from the playful workout that worries the Copenhagen censors to a chastely tender love scene. Following *Breaking The Waves* and *The Kingdom*, *Idiot's* proves Trier himself the most versatile auteur in the business. The Golden Palm has a clear winner.

The orgy scene is merely one jaw-dropper in a spectacularly unnerving comedy from Denmark's top enfant terrible

ner, if the jury has the clear nerve to recognise it.

Happiness, shown in the non-competitive Directors Fortnight, has been the sleeper of the side-shows. Where Todd Solondz's only previous feature *Welcome To The Dollhouse* was a gnomish black comedy about teenage life, this is a broad-sweep social-satire, a sort of *Short Cuts* on a long fuse. The cast comprises three sisters and half-a-dozen connecting characters, including a webogene shrink (Dylan Baker), a precocious pubescent boy, and a walking laundry bag of sexual neuroses unforgettably played by *Boogie Nights*' Philip Seymour Hoffman.

The film's explosive themes, from masturbation to murder via paedophilia, will probably ensure as long a sojourn as *Idiot's* in the office of that media bomb expert, the censor. But too much sniping and cutting would ruin the power and charm of a film that presents human desire as a vast planetary curse: one providing

surreal merriment at best, at worst holding an instructive mirror to our deepest natures.

Perhaps we are recovering from the art-and-media moratorium on sex that seemed to accompany AIDS. We know we can no longer do it as freely, but at least we can talk about it. So in Hal Hartley's enigmatic comedy *Henry Fool* a mystery stranger (Thomas Jay Ryan) brisquely seduces a family's womenfolk before turning the son into a literary genius. (It is Pasolini's *Theorem* gone to New England.) In *Love Is The Devil*, an erratic Francis Bacon biopic from British director John Maybury, the painter is seen tripping the dark fetishistic with a male lover.

And in Taiwan's *The Hole*... Well, in *The Hole*... what exactly? I called the film barney earlier, but it is of course as barney as a fox. A giant absurdist caprice from Tsai Ming-liang, who made the more sober if no less cryptic prize-winners *Long Live Love* and *The River*, the movie is also a wonderfully cheeky fable of birth, sex and regression. As a young tenant (Ming-liang regular Yang Kwei-mei) and his downstairs female neighbour battle with a city gripped by rain, disease and hysterical apophonia, their very apartments seem to perform a mating ritual.

Films are exchanged (rain-leaks); orifices are opened up (hole in boy's floor); body-parts inserted (boy sticks a swinging leg through). And the film goes beyond a comical, cryptogram about sex to hints at other fundamentals. Is the hero trying to get back to the womb? Is the whole of water-swept humanity trying to get back to the ocean? Like all great minimalist art, from Japanese haikus to Beckett, Ming-liang uses the trivial to open up the infinite.

Elsewhere Cannes has been the usual crash course in global colloid, one for which a crash hel-



Tripping the dark fetishistic: Derek Jacobi in 'Love Is The Devil', an erratic Francis Bacon biopic from British director John Maybury

met is sometimes needed to survive. Conquered by Hou Hsiao-hsien's *Flowers Of Shanghai*, a series of weighty tableaux barely victims set in a dim-lit brothel, you then move to the Greek-Australian *Head On* (gay life with a handheld camera) or France's *La Classe De Neige* (sensative growing-up tale scuppered by grand guignol payoff) or the Iranian *The Apple*.

This last was popular with some, who compared it with that other Tehran *travaille* first hailed at Cannes, *The White Balloon*. The real-life story behind Samira Makhmalbaf's dramatised documentary is intriguing. Two young sisters were shut up by their parents for 12 years - unwashed, unexercised, unedu-

cated - until social workers freed them. But the liberation story we watch on screen is more ambiguous. How much was staged, or restaged, for the camera? Were scenes ad-libbed or scripted? Are we watching fact, or fiction, or fable?

More honest, even exultant, in its aesthetic bewilderments and multiple-exposures was Nanni Moretti's *Aprile*. With Roberto Benigni's *La Vita E Bella* this provided a dual Italian high point in mid-festival, two free-tying comedies on cautionary themes. *Aprile* is a personal memoir like the bearded filmmaker-comedian's last Cannes hit

Dear Diary. This time he alternates delight as a new father with agonised semi-involvement in the political scene, shooting a "Right is wrong" documentary about a country gripped by Berlusconi and Umberto Bossi. The film sprays a little, but Moretti's mournful-mirthful personality is so enchanting we forgive him the longeurs as well as the left-wing lectures.

Some festivalgoers refused to forgive Benigni, Italy's other top comedian/auteur, for his Nazi concentration camp scenes in *La Vita E Bella*. This often brilliant second world war comedy takes the hero, played by the spike-haired director, all the way from pre-war scenes as a waiter constantly ambushed by Fascist fists

- in one Chaplinesque scene he addresses a school, hilariously, on "Aryan superiority" - to the stables. Though there is comedy and even some sentimentality in the camp scenes, where the hero fortifies his little son by pretending that it is all a game with points for survival, Benigni uses skill, wit and tact.

Besides which, isn't 50 years a long enough period for strict mourning on the Nazi era? Mustn't a time come when history is opened up - even the bleakest recent history - to the full range of quirky artistic response? And where better to do this than in a film festival where almost every other taboo seems to have bitten the Côte d'Azur dust.

Hard work and all play

Andrew Clark talks to an outspoken young Russian conductor, Yakov Kreizberg

Certain subjects are off-limits with Yakov Kreizberg. Ask him whether he regrets not being able to make recordings with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, of which he is chief conductor, and he'll tell you that the record industry has "no morals, no values, they've lost the path and have only themselves to blame". The Arts Council ranks about the same on his list of contemptibles, and he kills the conversation stone-dead if you refer to his older brother, the Paris-based conductor Semyon Bychkov, with whom he is not on speaking terms.

But mention *Katya Kabanova*, which he conducts at Glyndebourne over the next four weeks, and Kreizberg will gladly talk about "the

the Bournemouth orchestra. Kreizberg was not universally popular when he made his Glyndebourne debut in 1992 with *Jenůfka* some musicians felt he demanded more from them than his musical maturity justified. The reviews told another story, and he was invited back in 1995 for *Don Giovanni* - which showed how rapidly he was developing as a conductor. Kreizberg's single-mindedness is now regarded as one of his prime assets, and he must be considered a leading contender to succeed Andrew Davis as Glyndebourne's music director.

But Kreizberg is hardly the type you imagine to be plotting his way up the career ladder. Bournemouth's financial problems were well known when he was offered the job of principal conductor in 1994, and despite the expiry of his three-year contract, he shows no sign of wanting to leave. "When I arrived, someone wrote that it was a pity a conductor like me should settle for an orchestra that was 'one phone-call away from bankruptcy'. Well, three years later we may still be 'one phone-call away from bankruptcy', but I'm very happy with this orchestra. We're trying to do great things."

He makes clear, however, that his loyalty depends on the orchestra's ability to continue developing its international profile. With a residency at the Vienna Musikverein and tours to France and Germany in the offing, a lot is at stake. "If the financial problems become such that I can no longer take the orchestra where it needs to be heard, I will leave. I'm investing time and energy to make this orchestra competitive. I want to be working at a level where I can make decisions that are artistically important. But how am I expected to attract better musicians when they can't even afford decent instruments?"

The funding situation in Berlin was equally fraught when he joined the Komische Oper. After German unification there was talk of closing one of the city's three opera companies, and



Yakov Kreizberg, who conducts 'Katya Kabanova' at Glyndebourne from tonight

the Komische Oper looked the most expendable. That pressure has faded, and Kreizberg is busy planning repertoire up to 2002. He conducts about 60 performances each season, a heavy commitment by modern standards, and will lead the company on tour in Japan after his Glyndebourne *Katya*.

He says that unlike Berlin's other two houses, the Komische Oper cannot afford expensive singers - but it reaps the benefits of the old-fashioned ensemble system, under which everyone lives and works together. "The days of the ensemble may be finished, but I can't see opera any other way. If you invite guest singers, you may get a good night of singing, but you'll get a dreadful night of opera. At the Komische Oper, whether or not you like the production, you can guarantee it was the result of two months' hard work with everyone present - just like they did under the old east German system. We do it willingly, so that we can get the music and staging in

complete harmony. The orchestra knows the voices are often less than we desire, and so it's up to them to carry the performance. They do it and are proud of it." Devotion to Bournemouth and Berlin has not stopped Kreizberg being noticed elsewhere. Next season he makes debuts with the New York Philharmonic and Philadelphia orchestras, and in 2000 he will visit St Petersburg for the first time since his enforced departure in the mid-1970s. Along with his Mahler, Rakhmaninov and Mozart, he has become a notable interpreter of Shostakovich, and says the experience of growing up under a totalitarian regime is central to his interpretations.

"When I hear Shostakovich's music, my bones ache - it was the only way he could express his pain, his anger and contempt. I'm not saying non-Russians can't do it justice, but they don't automatically know what lies behind it. If you play the first movement of the Fifteenth Symphony at a brisk tempo, as some do, it becomes perky, parodistic, like a joke. If you play it

slightly slower, it becomes scary and menacing, and that's the way I believe he meant it. It's the same with the finale of the Fifth Symphony: it doesn't take much to make the difference between a sounding triumphant or evil. That's typical of Shostakovich."

The Russian connection provides the clue to Kreizberg's understanding of Janáček. When he first conducted *Katya*, it was in a German-language production which made nonsense of the music's speech-rhythms. The turning-point came when he worked on the Glyndebourne *Jenůfka*, and discovered the similarity between Czech and Russian words. Returning now to *Katya*, he has taken renewed delight in Janáček's extraordinary world. "With one twist, half a bar becomes a symphony. The opera is full of micro-scenes, but when you're listening, each is like a lifetime of music and emotion. You can't compare it with anything else."

Katya Kabanova opens tonight and runs till June 21 (44-1273-813813).

Opera in Amsterdam/Richard Fairman

'Shabby little shocker' gets exciting new look

There are always the same comments. *Tosca* is old hat, they say, tired, predictable, boring. If only somebody could give it new life, stage it with flair, find singers who had charisma, play the music as though it had real quality, make the opera dangerous and exciting again.

Amsterdam just has. The big news of the Netherlands Opera's new production of *Tosca* at the Muziektheater was expected to be Bryn Terfel's first appearance in the role of Scarpia (together with a band of young singers, which includes Bartoli, Gheorghiu and Alagna, he has reached a position where everything he does finds a media frenzy). Well, Terfel was certainly no let-down. But there was more to this production than a single star performer.

Do not bother to take in a programme or cough sweets. What you need for this *Tosca* is a monitor for high blood pressure. By the end of the first act the production has already set the adrenalin pumping. Admittedly, the last scene is way over-the-top: the chorus is banished to the wings and Scarpia is left alone on stage, surrounded by several dozen giant steel candelabra which burst spectacularly into flame (symbolic of his burning desire?) while a blazing backdrop of Dante's *Inferno* unfurls behind him.

A lesser Scarpia would have melted in the heat, but Terfel has a voice and a personality so big that he simply glowed more brightly. His success in sizing up to this larger-than-life challenge hodes well for the great roles that lie ahead. In keeping with the rest of the production, his Scarpia was a wild-eyed, sex-crazed, horribly alluring monster, who could attract and repel in equal measure. He also sang the music very well, making the words crackle with sparks of sexuality and sadism.

The other architect of the evening's success was Riccardo Chailly, who has arguably done nothing better in the opera-house. Never has *Tosca* sounded less like the "shabby little shocker" it has been dubbed.

Thanks to some first-class playing from the Royal Amsterdam Concertgebouw, there was not a hint of vulgarity in the music. Chailly kept the players' minds fixed on exactness of rhythm and precision of balance, while whipping up the excitement whenever it was needed.

The rest of the cast was perhaps more ordinary. With eyes closed one could not

Don't bother with cough sweets; what you need for this 'Tosca' is a monitor for high blood pressure

mistake Richard Margison for a real Italian tenor, but he has Cavaradossi's part confidently under his belt and sang with unstinting generosity. Mario Luperi was a sound Angelotti; Enrico Fissore's exemplary Sacristan and John Graham-Hall's chilling Spoletta were both asked to overplay their roles. As for *Tosca* herself, it seems strange to report that the title-role should have made a limited impact. But

Catherine Malfitano (for all the fame of her film version of the opera) was not intended by nature for the part. Her voice lacks Italianate colour, her acting is all artifice.

Future casts will have to work hard not to be upstaged by Nikolaus Lehnhoff's space-age production - a sort of grand guignol for the millennium. Either he or his designer, Raimund Bauer, has his eye on the James Bond films. The sets were hi-tech monstrosities that imprisoned art-sized mortals. Scarpia's headquarters was a towering subterranean vault with mechanised doors and staircases that disappeared at a touch, trapping *Tosca* with no way of escape. In the final act she made her suicidal leap from an 8th floor penthouse open to the stars.

It was all too much - and yet somehow it remained true to Puccini's opera, a compelling display of late 20th-century melodramatic excess. In true Bond style, Scarpia became an operatic Blafeld, the ultimate off adversary, stroking his pet kitten as he contemplated the next torture session. And in opera these days even the cats are stars. Jaap had his own biography in the programme, listing previous credits with Compag, Full and Kit-e-kat.



Bryn Terfel (right) sings Scarpia for the first time, with Richard Margison in Nikolaus Lehnhoff's space-age production

Taking so

Ivan Ma Ritchie

Cheek and c
that survive

Alastair Macaulay

ARTS



The sight of an ungainly gaggle of women, standing doing nothing with nothing much on, seemed to confound the audience.

Arndt Lamm

Taking sex out of nakedness

Lynn MacRitchie has her view of beauty challenged by an unusual 'Show'

The guys on the sidewalk outside the Guggenheim Museum couldn't believe their luck. Oblivious to the rain beating down on their heads, ignoring the puddles growing ever deeper around their feet, they gawped through the Fifth Avenue window at the best free show in town.

There, in the full glare of a helium balloon spotlight held on a rope like an indoor sun, 19 beautiful models, five quite naked, the rest in skimpy bikinis, stood motionless as they were filmed and photographed by New York artist Vanessa Beecroft and her crew.

The impromptu audience, drenched but hypnotised by the dazzling light and tantalising flesh, had stumbled on the final stages of the set-up for "Show", a performance by Beecroft given last month before an invited audience of 1,500 art and fashion world insiders. In October, a version of the event is due to be staged in Paris at the Fondation Cartier.

At the official performance in the Guggenheim that evening, Frank Gawpung would have been frowned on. "Of course, it's nothing sexual," was the comment of choice, repeated like a mantra by the determinedly cool audience, bundled up in scarves and raincoats within feet of so much naked flesh. No? Girls in crimson rhinestone bikinis, needle sharp high-heeled mules - not sexy?

They are, surely, when Tom Ford for Gucci, designer and lender for the occasion of these expensive scraps of female decoration, sends them down the catwalk. They are, too, on the pages of glossy fashion magazines. Harper's Bazaar, Cos-

opolitan and Elle all feature that very bikini on their May covers. So how come sexy wasn't sexy wrapped in the Guggenheim's curves; how come sexy turned solemn under Solomon's rotunda? Confounded expectation was the key to the performance. The models didn't model, they just stood around for nearly three hours (and stretched and sat down and even walked out in one case when it all got too much). They didn't hide that their feet hurt and that their crazy high heels made them wobble and tremble and that their skin was covered in goose pimples under the all-over makeup.

Their expressions were grim, fed-up and cold. And so our looking at them became not a source of pleasure (as it would have been at a fashion show) but something uncomfortable, furtive, done in little bursts, afraid to show too much interest in case it was misinterpreted as actually wanting to look at these beautiful bodies.

Some of the audience distracted themselves with art history. Murmurings about the significance of the nude, the historical role of women in performance could be overheard in low-voiced conversations, along with where to go for dinner (of course) and who was getting married next week (marriage is big right now).

The fat man who rushed in and yelled that we should be ashamed of ourselves for watching such a spectacle - "Twenty five years of feminism for this!" he roared - was politely ignored. But none of the comments was convincing, really, not even his. The sight of an ungainly gaggle of women, standing doing nothing with nothing much on, seemed to have com-

pletely confounded this crowd of so-called sophisticates.

Beecroft, born in Genoa in 1969 of English and Italian parents, has put on numerous similar performances throughout Europe since 1994, including at last year's Venice Biennale. She began by using herself as the model, decked out in makeup and funny wigs, before putting them on others. Now she refers to the women and their costumes and makeup as her "tools".

She calls her work an attempt to bring the classical ideal of beauty she was taught at art school in

The models didn't hide the fact that they were cold and their feet hurt

Italy "in touch with the street". She talks of the "power" of the women she assembles in designer semi-nakedness, standing around in careless challenge to the viewer's gaze. But her position is ambiguous, her need to be associated with glamour personal as well as detached: she did the whole photo shoot wearing backless mules as high-heeled as the models'. It is hard to resist the impression that it is the open collaboration with glamour rather than any attempt to subvert it which gives the performances their impact.

"I asked her what her fantasy performance would be, and this was it," said Yvonne Force, self-styled curatorial consultant who has worked with Beecroft over the past 18 months on the Guggenheim project. In the late nineties, young artists are open about wanting their work to be associated with glamour, style and success. A well-connected fixer, such as Force, can help to achieve this.

A former painter, she is frank about deciding to give up her own solitary work in the studio to become an adviser to individual and corporate collectors and "work with people" as she calls it on a range of art projects. In this case including the top echelons of the fashion world. To bring off "Show", Force had to fit together a complex jigsaw - the artist, the designer, the makeup experts, the film crew, the location, the sponsors - in just the right way and at just the right time. And the setting was crucial. Under Frank Lloyd Wright's rotunda, the piece would have optimum reinforcement: the ultimate art city, the ultimate art museum, the ultimate fashion designer, the ultimate in-crowd, confirming by their attendance that this curious non-event had assumed iconic status just by being allowed to happen.

Lauren Hutton, the senior model and an unexpected visitor to the set-up that afternoon (she had been having a private walk through the "China, 5,000 Years" exhibition and stopped to see what was going on) offered an insider's insight on the spectacle.

"After years of being looked at, of having machines thrust in your face, it gets hard for models to look outward, to take a view of the world..." she said. A picture in a magazine can be stared at endlessly, the viewer's appetite

satiated. Looking at a living woman, the gaze cannot be sustained for too long without becoming an intrusion, an assault. Perhaps this explained the air of slight discomfort in the audience that evening, the feeling that somehow, in some mysterious way, we were doing something wrong.

Hutton also confided that "models are almost always in pain, physical pain... That's why some of the girls take drugs, just to get a break from the pain". Thin girls in pain doesn't have quite the same ring as supermodels, somehow.

The camera doesn't show this, of course: it does lie, and it steals souls - and not just of those in front of the lens. When we talked earlier that day, Beecroft had said that her work "brings the concept of beauty and misery together". I was not sure if I had heard her correctly. If I had understood. Afterwards, reading the background publicity material, I learned that she herself had been anorexic, and had kept a diary of her condition which she had later used as part of an exhibition.

A thin girl in pain, indeed, now orchestrating wordless shows of aching glamour, which, endured for their full duration, become meditations on a time and a culture obsessed with appearance, no matter what the cost. And a rhinestone bikini? That costs \$2,425.

"Show", a performance by Vanessa Beecroft, was at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Curated and produced by Yvonne Force Inc. Sponsored by the Eli Broad Family Foundation and Vicki and Kent Logan, with wardrobe by Tom Ford for Gucci. "Show Part 2" takes place at the Fondation Cartier in Paris in October.

Conducting a rescue mission

Pierre Ruhe on conductor James Judd, who left his podium to tackle a financial crisis

American orchestras, dependent almost entirely on corporate largesse and wealthy individuals for survival, expect their music directors to possess charisma both for charming the listeners and for opening the cheque books of potential donors. Conductors understandably tend to loathe the gala dinner parties and the soliciting phone calls expected of them, especially since these essential functions demand at least half their time. Still, they always keep at least one foot on the podium.

Thus James Judd, 48, the British-born music director of the Florida Philharmonic, is a unique case. Three years ago the Philharmonic was on the precipice of financial collapse, \$2.3m in debt and without a board chairman. Judd suspended his conducting activities mid-season - for two make-or-break months - and stood as acting chairman, devoting his energy to finding an affluent and persuasive management board. At that time, an official with the American Symphony Orchestra League acknowledged that Judd's actions were unprecedented. Nothing in Judd's resume would hint at his unconventional sense of responsibility. In college, in the late 1960s, he co-founded the Young Musicians Orchestra of London. Lorin Maazel soon afterwards named him assistant conductor with the Cleveland Orchestra, a prestigious two year appointment. Involvement with Claudio Abbado's European Community Youth Orchestra, later with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and the Gustav Mahler Orchestra earned him a spot on London's "one rehearsal only" conducting circuit, a dizzying experience.

He took the first opportunity to settle down. "When I was offered the position in Florida, 10 years ago, Erich Leinsdorf advised me not to take it, that I'd find an artistic desert here," Judd said recently. "But it was important for me to be somewhere that everything hadn't already been done. It was a chance to build a major orchestra in a community with 4.5m people."

During the financial crisis of 1995 he missed 13 performances - with both the Philharmonic and the Greater Miami Opera, which he then concurrently directed. But the gamble paid off, keeping the orchestra afloat, if not yet solvent. The Philharmonic now carries 84 players on a 41-week contract at a modest base salary. Its endowment is only \$2m but with an \$11m budget and \$2.3m debt, it is a long road to stability. At least the books have been balanced in the last two years and attendance is rising.

Today, Judd's energy and personality are what keep the Philharmonic running: he's an admitted worrier, workaholic, and micromanager. At a recent concert, before the musicians arrived, he was spotted on stage arranging music stands and adjusting the lights. "What still attracts me to South Florida is that the potential for building a first-rate ensemble is incredible, given the wealth here." The Philharmonic has yet to tap into that wealth.

One possible scenario was scored by the New World Symphony, an advanced training orchestra for students, founded a decade ago by conductor Michael Tilson Thomas. Ted Arison, a cruise ship magnate, endowed the NWS with \$60m of his company's stock; it now owns its own theatre in a trendy pedestrian zone in Miami Beach. Although the NWS's education mission is different from the tradition-bound Philharmonic's, it gives about as many con-

One enormous money-making niche, mostly unexplored, is a Latin Pops series

certs a season. Subscribers are certain to find the NWS's broad programming and celebrated guest artists quite attractive - another obstacle for the Philharmonic.

Despite the financial troubles, artistic matters under Judd have risen meteorically. Mahler has become a calling card. Its second-ever recording, of Mahler's First Symphony (on the Harmonia Mundi label), won several record magazine awards and prompted an invitation for the Philharmonic to play in Vienna. The travel funds could not be raised, however. Concerts in Montpellier, France, its debut tour, are planned for this July. The UK beckons in 1999, if money is available.

Still, the Philharmonic has reason for optimism. One big money-making niche, mostly unexplored, is a Latin Pops series, addressing the huge Spanish-speaking population of South Florida.

For now, daily fund-raising is still the priority, an unhappy mistress to music making. "We're trying to raise \$6m in the next two years as a nucleus fund," Judd explained. "After that we'll start on a \$30m endowment campaign, which is still not that much for an American orchestra. People have said they want an orchestra in South Florida. Now that we've put a price tag on it we'll see if they're willing to pay for it."

Cheek and charm that survive time

Alastair Macaulay finds 'Major Barbara' unexpectedly up to date

Peter Shirley (a penniless man supported by the Salvation Army): "I wouldn't have your conscience for all your money." Andrew Undershaft (a millionaire who has made his fortune through gunpowder): "And I wouldn't have your money for all your conscience."

We are on vintage Bernard Shaw terrain in *Major Barbara*. The dialectic between opposed values has nerve and wit, and those opposed values are still around today, despite the fact that *Major Barbara* was written in 1905. God and/or Mammon? Saving souls without employment? Unethical but caring capitalism or ethical but ineffectual poverty? Who is to sell arms to whom? At moments during Peter Hall's production at London's Piccadilly Theatre, you can hear gasps around the auditorium. You do not expect Shaw to be *that* topical, *that* prescient.

What takes your breath away more often is the

cheek and charm of Shaw's writing. Often his characters sound Wildean: "I am a millionaire. That is my religion." "He knows nothing, and he thinks he knows everything that points to a political career."

True, it is also Shaw's cheek and charm that keep him from being a great playwright: they make his arguments fun and often rob his dramas of depth. There is also his excessive love of audience-conscious speechifying. *Major Barbara* is not the only Shaw play where I have thought during the last act: "If only they'd stop talking." Even so, Shaw is good company, and bracing. Hall's staging neatly shows both the great and growing virtues and incidental but considerable weaknesses of his repertory company. Peter Bowles plays Andrew Undershaft with such debonair relaxation that he calmly takes charge of the play whenever he is onstage. It is a relaxation that carries him (just) over two or three fluffed lines,

and that makes him compelling when he listens, expressionless, to other characters. Anna Carteret - never funnier than as his Black-nellish wife Lady Britomart - has just as much authority and aplomb. And David Yelland brings a wonderful innocence and perturbation to their prospective son-in-law Adolphus Cousins.

Carteret and Yelland are mainstays of Hall's company, and are utterly exemplary in the musicality with which they bring Shaw's lines to expressive life; a musicality which Shaw needs and which - to judge from results - Hall loves to develop in his actors. Michael Pennington, Stephen Noonan, Rebecca Saire, Dickon Tyrrell, Angela Crow, Marty Cruickshank all add good supporting playing, some of it of de luxe quality.

And yet the production also contains Crispin Bonham-Carter as Stephen Undershaft. He recycles the same four gestures - left arm forward, right arm forward, both arms forward,



A stalwart of Hall's company, David Yelland plays Adolphus Cousins, with Jemma Redgrave as the eponymous Salvationist

Alastair Mac

hands clasped behind back - and such is as wooden as his earnestly delivered and unlit speaking. Jemma Redgrave, as Major Barbara, is much better, but

never good enough for the role. In the first half, I was aware of the lack of music in her delivery. In the second half, she had music but it was still not enough. Nothing she does is wrong; she has good looks and excellent stage manners but is never revealing. John Elmes and Victoria Hastie do character acting of the more tire-

somey bumpkins kind. *Major Barbara* comes around too seldom for theatre-goers to mind these flaws; and all the Hall repertory productions mature with

successful performances. Part of the fun of theatre-going is to watch actors learn on the job. But it is a pity that a few of these actors have so much to learn.

How to Spend It

More Tour victories.

More Tour players.

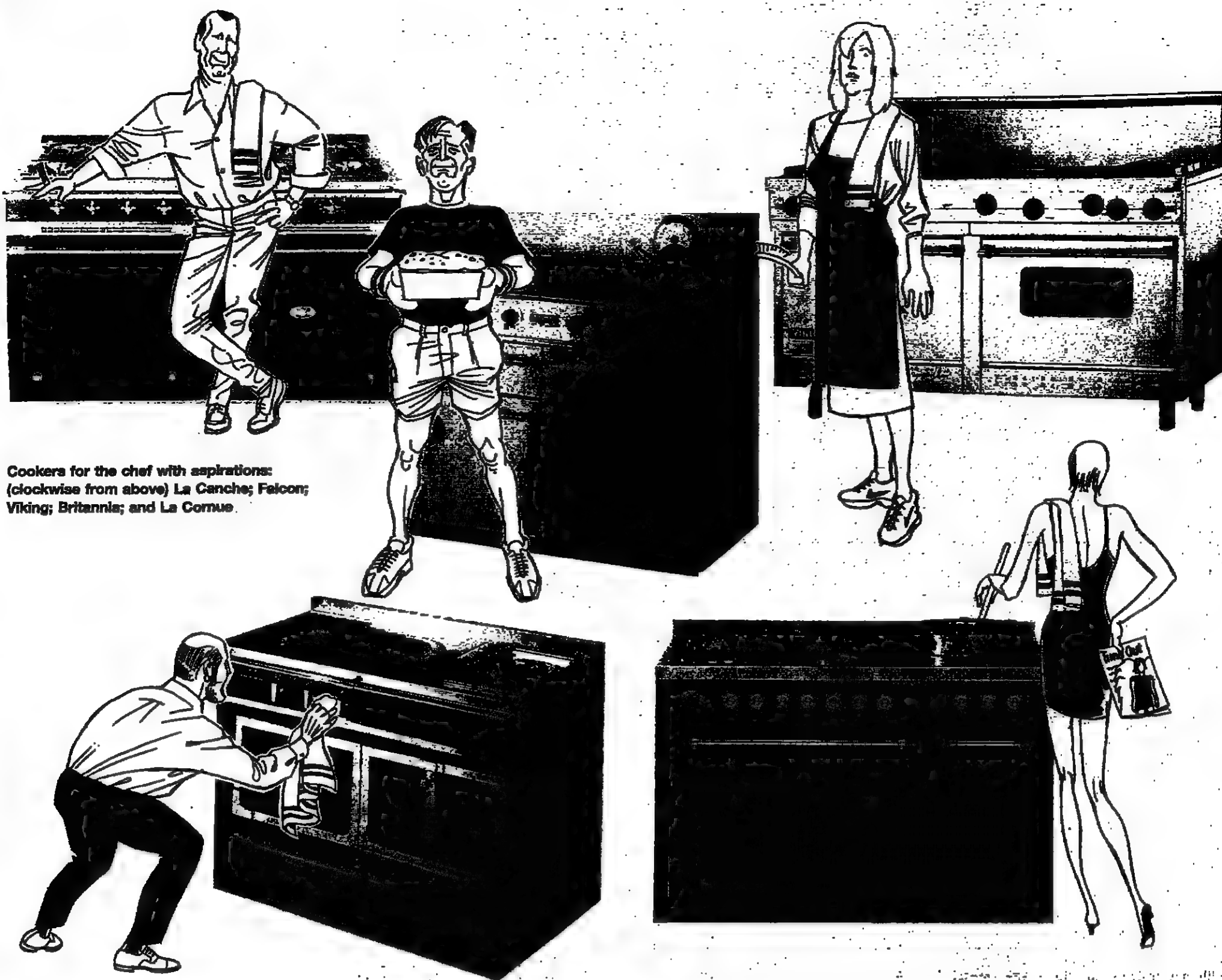
More Tour prize money.

More Tour cuts.

IRON AWE.

Stainless Irons totally dominate the US and European PGA Tours. In America in 1997 this iron nearly tripled sales as many events at that closest rival, Titleist, Europe the number one player, increased a staggering 42% over the course of the year. Cast iron proof that the Mizuno range of irons is an awesome family of clubs.

MIZUNO
SERIOUS PERFORMANCE



Cookers for the chef with aspirations: (clockwise from above) La Canche; Falcon; Viking; Britannia; and La Cornue.

If you can't stand the heat...

... don't buy a cooker. But needs must, and Hugo Arnold steers you through the kitchen cornucopia.

They can cost as much as a small car, but then if you have the kitchen you have to have the cooker to go with it. Powerful, large, semi-professional models make dinner parties a doddle, but can they cope with bacon and eggs?

Britannia

It was the stainless steel finish that clinched the deal. All the other cookers in the department store were a bit passé, all coloured, with hobs separated from built-in ovens. Not quite what she had in mind when she went to the Ideal Home Exhibition and seen just what the new look was. She went ahead and bought a fitted kitchen - mum and dad helped her out - with some stainless-steel touches. The Britannia really does look the part, quite professional really. She doesn't do a lot of cooking, most of her friends like to go out, as indeed does she.

Dinner parties are a nice idea, but they always seem to mean so much work. Her boyfriend, who moved in a few months ago, is great on the cooking front, but he's not keen on clearing up. The last one meant most of the weekend was spent cleaning, and stainless steel burners are a devil to keep shiny, which you have to do because otherwise it really looks terribly grubby.

The kitchen is the most important room in the house though, and everybody loves to congregate here. They did a big stew the other night, but it took an age to heat up, even on the big burner. She did a large dinner for her birthday and although the oven was big she still ran out of space. Having five burners instead of four makes a big difference. She can use her ridged griddle plate on two and still have plenty of room. The one in the middle is just right for the stainless steel fish kettle ordered for her birthday.

The Britannia is essentially a domestic cooker, expanded in size to accommodate a larger oven and a larger-than-average central gas ring. It is perfectly adequate for most people's needs, and the build quality

reflects its intended market. It is designed to cook family meals, not to be the powerhouse of a restaurant. Its shiny, stainless steel finish gives it something of a professional air.

From £1,500 to about £3,000. The basic model includes a fish burner (the gas jet is shaped to go under a fish kettle), four standard burners and one oven. The top of the range has two ovens and a variety of hobs, including an indoor barbecue and wok burner.

La Canche

For quality of build, he knows his La Canche was good value. Based on the professional Ambassade range, used in so many bistros in France, its no-nonsense design appeals to his rather minimalist taste. So minimalist it doesn't even have automatic lighting but then it comes with a rather natty stick lighter which always impresses his friends. His style of cooking, robust Provence meets northern Italy - he can't really say Italian because that is what everyone else cooks - demands the power of the 5kW burner, but he realises that heating a pan of milk is easier on the small 1.5kW back burner. He may be minimalist, but he's also practical. He considered a gas oven, but went instead for electric with internal grill - the smoke from the charcoal grill can get too much, even for him on occasions, and it is good to have the more conventional alternative. The removable griddle plate was a good idea. His only criticism is the knobs, which get very hot. Sunday lunches, for which he is justly famous, always involve the children and there have been one or two close shaves. He ignored the advice about ventilation and if only he could admit it, he was wrong not to put it in. Things get a bit too hot for comfort.

Minimalist in the extreme, investment in this stove has saved money in all the right places. The lack of an ignition system can seem irritating, but they are expensive and can go wrong - far better, it would seem, to spend the money on other more important areas, such as the

heavy duty tops. Overtly designed for the domestic market, the La Canche's build quality is suitable for semi-professional use and more than adequate for most domestic purposes. It comes in a range of finishes, stainless steel and other colours. From £1,500 to about £3,000. The basic model, the Glory, is 600mm wide, has four burners and one oven and looks much like a standard cooker. Top of the range is the Fontenay with one main oven, a subsidiary one, warming oven, plus 9/4 burner hob and extra burners, or items like an electric bain marie, or electric deep fryer.

Falcon Dominator

He's nothing if not practical. The kitchen was done on a shoestring. A beautiful bit of oak he picked up. Designed and made the cupboards himself. The Falcon is what they use in restaurants, plenty of power and although the design is a bit basic, it has six 5kW burners and a truly enormous oven. Bakes his own bread; he can do a whole batch at one time and fill up the freezer. He can sear steaks, roast fish and caramelize just the way they do in restaurants. Costs a bit to run, mind you, but not when you divide it by the numbers who are fed. There were a few problems with insulation; the cooker is designed to stand alone in a sea of stainless steel in a restaurant kitchen. But that was solved with heat-proof boards. He knew how important the extraction was, but managed to pick up a hood and some ducting at a catering auction in the Midlands. He splashed out on the extraction motor, went for the best and mounted it on the outside wall. Those suppers on a Saturday night just wouldn't be so cosy if you had to put up with the noise - particularly with the reconditioned professional double-height Williams fridge purring away as well.

The Dominator is the basic model from Falcon. It is a no-frills workhorse found in many small restaurants. Power is its leading attraction; the rings on top will have your frying pan smok-

ing in less time than it takes to get the steak from the fridge. Build quality is of a higher specification than a domestic model. The design is basic or brutal, depending on how you look at it. About £2,500. This includes six burners and one oven, with a few minimal variations, like black sides rather than stainless steel. For greater variety, look at some of the other Falcon products.

Viking

She bakes cakes, cooks for the children and is always giving dinner parties. Fed up with too little space and a lack of power, she finally splashed out, calming herself with the thought that she might get into a bit of catering if only she had the time. At least, that is what she told herself as she decided on the deluxe six burner, griddle and summer plate version. The kitchen had to be redone anyway, thank goodness. A Viking is a lot deeper than you'd expect, but then American homes are so much bigger, aren't they? Her husband couldn't believe the price, but as he never does any shopping for anything, he could hardly be expected to know.

With its stainless steel finish, heat-proof knobs and oven lights, it offers sufficient domestic niceties while still retaining a professional appearance. The salesman was very insistent on ventilation, which she hadn't thought of. Quite why a bit of stainless steel ducting should cost so much she doesn't know, but at least the grease traps - nasty phrase - go in the dishwasher. Turning the oven on can seem a bit excessive, particularly on Friday nights when all she can manage is some Marks and Spencer meals, but she refuses to get a microwave. She'd never live it down and they look so ghastly.

The Viking is American-built, more than sufficiently robust for domestic use but designed for home rather than restaurant or catering use (although a few restaurants do use them). The design reflects this. Build quality is sufficiently robust for domestic or semi-professional use. Shipping costs

and UK distribution charges add to the price, making it more expensive than it should be. From £2,000 to about £3,000. The basic model is 700mm wide, has four burners and one oven and looks much like a standard old-fashioned cooker in that it will fit into the existing gap in your workshop. After that, you move on to wider models, two ovens and a whole range of choices on the hob including griddle plates.

La Cornue

He (for no woman could ever contemplate spending this much on a cooker) doesn't simply like cooking, he adores it. There is something of the Aga present in a La Cornue, which reassures him. The combination of copper, steel and nickel

makes for a very solid piece of kit. The oven is "a dream" - with its concave vaulted shape which, he believes, is one reason why his roasts are so good. Could it also be the plaque with his name on it? This is no off-the-shelf stove, but a custom-made piece of engineering, he and his wife went to France to see it being made. It took several meetings to decide on the final spec, but he's supremely happy with the result. There is talk of going the whole hog and getting a complete Cornue kitchen, but there are the children's school fees to think about and they all eat out a lot, most evenings really. Christmas dinner would be a dream, except they always go to her parents' house in the country. He likes the classic design, reminds him of the glory days of steam

engines, another passion. The Cornue build quality is astonishing, so solid you expect it to go on for ever. And it does. This cooker takes the weight and specification of a professional stove and turns it into something beautiful and unlike all other cookers. No stainless steel in sight. From about £5,000 to £30,000. The basic model comes with four rings and an oven. After that, the only limitation is budget. The company will build a cooker from its component parts to look like an integrated whole - griddle plates, flat tops and fryers as you wish.

Stockists include John Lewis, Hansens (0171-351 6939) and Buyers and Sellers (0171-229 1947). Both will supply nationwide and overseas.

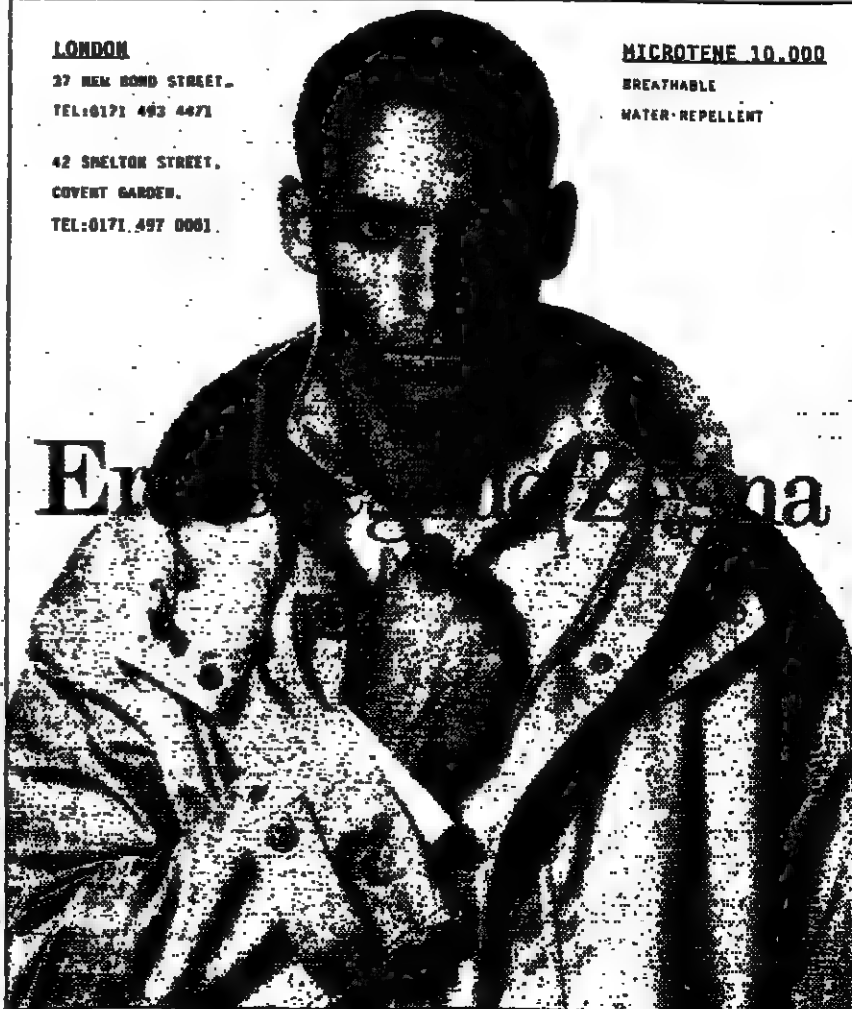
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End of the season

The low colour status

John Polan

V

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How to Spend It

Fashion

The low-key colour of status

Brenda Polan immerses herself in beige, and finds it rich and sexy

When, in one of those spats in which the fashion industry so rarely indulges, Gianni Versace sought a suitably crushing riposte to Giorgio Armani's accusations of vulgarity, the best he could come up with was along the lines of: "How would a man whose favourite colour is beige know anything about sexy clothes?"

Beige has always had something of a bad press. The very word is somehow dull-coloured, restrained, insignificant. We tend to subscribe to Alison Lurie's opinion when, in her rattle through the psychology of dress, *The Language of Clothes*, she spares it half a paragraph: "...tan or beige is the most neutral of all colours, the least communicative. It is not by chance that the classic stage and screen detective appears in a tan trench coat... People who prefer to conceal their emotions, or must do so for professional reasons, often wear outfits that are largely or entirely of tan or beige..."

Lurie's skim through the collected works of the theorists of colour is generally glib but insights do slip through - such as the code to her beige paragraph: "The lighter these colours, however, the more likely it is that they have also been chosen to demonstrate status through Conspicuous Consumption."

And suddenly you are relieved to know the author sometimes lifts her eye from the page and rests it on the people around her. It is, after all, a novelist's eye and Lurie, a professor of English literature at an Ivy League university in New England and regular habitué of the well-heeled parts of Florida, must have observed, if only subliminally, that beige is the colour of money.

Old money, that is. Beige, in all its shades, is certainly about status in that it is expensive to maintain. Only shades of white go to the dry cleaners more often. It calls out, skin-like, to smut, dog hair and vinaigrette, and the tiniest, most thoroughly dabbed-at stain glares like a beacon from its pallor.

But it expresses status in subtler ways. Its very restraint speaks of no need to attract attention. In its quiet neutrality, it boasts of generations of exquisite taste refined to a perfect minimalism. It is the shade of the cultivated purist.

Perhaps that is why it is intimidating. One of the phrases the stylist and wardrobe consultants hear most often is: "Oh, but I can't wear beige." On further questioning, it usually transpires that the beige-phobe has never really tried. She just knows she would fade away in beige. It's not her.

"It takes a sophisticated taste to understand beige,"

Jill Sander, the most sophisticated of designers, once told me. Warning to her theme, that coolest of women elaborated lyrically: "There are a thousand different shades of beige from palest sand to deepest honey, from rich cappuccino to icy stone; all of them are beautiful. Some seem flecked with gold, some, you can't decide if they are really grey, some are shadowed with blue, some have a peach-like blush to them. I am like Jean Muir with her hundreds of shades of navy blue; only for me it is beige. Always beige."



If you have ever tried to match beiges from different sources, you will know what she means. It is almost impossible. The best you can hope for is to match tones. Different shades of blue beige go well together as do a light and a dark creamy beige, and so on. Teaming a "greige" with a camel, for instance, rarely works.

This is knowledge which well-bred American women acquire with their chromosomes. To see a fine-boned, honey-blond WASP immaculately attired in her leisure outfit of camel trench coat, tan pleat-front trousers, creamy beige cashmere twin set, Hermès silk square, tan Cole-Haan loafers and saddle-stitched shoulder bag is to see class on the purposeful hoof.

It looks just as good on a brunette or a redhead - as long as the shade of beige is the right one. Which is her shade of beige is something an individual can only ascertain by trying on lots in good daylight.

There are rules of thumb, of course, but beige can surprise you, looking positively hostile on the hanger and surprisingly heavenly against the skin. Redheads do well with sandy, olive-tinted beiges, brunettes with creamy-peachy ones. Blondes can usually get away with all shades.

But, since fashion this

summer offers an abundance of beiges, it is worth a marathon try-on.

Because, as Lurie failed to notice, desert beiges have a glamour which may borrow some status from the class-conscious membership but has more to do with the zeitgeist, his rugged bush drabs and intrepid adventures in dangerous terrain.



Clockwise from bottom left: Single-button trouser suit, £478, and navy print chiffon top, £135, both by Marl. Gold hoop earrings, £138, by Tom Binns, all from Fenwick's, New Bond Street, London W1; tel 0171 499 9161.

Long satin-backed crepe slip dress, £180, and cotton ribbed cardigan jacket, £95, both by Press & Beatty, 22 South Molton Street, London W1 and branches; tel 01622 763211. Gold kitten heel sandals, £195, from Gina, 189 Sloane Street, London SW1; tel 0171 235 2932. Trouser suit, £1,220, and white cotton sleeveless shirt, £100, by Jill Sander at Browns. Tan leather driving loafers, £295.50, from Russell & Bromley. Suede halter neck dress, £299, under three-quarter length silk face coat, £259, from Episode, 172 Regent Street, London W1; tel 0171 439 3581. Iridescent silk scarf, £145, by Georgina von Etzdorf from Fenwick's. Mock croc court shoes, £125, by Russell & Bromley. Beige cashmere halter top, £505, matching cardigan, £800, silk satin skirt £200 by Rebecca Moses from Browns, South Molton Street, London W1; tel 0171 491 7833. Slingbacks, £145, from Russell & Bromley branches; tel 0171 499 8903.

Photographer: Wim Winter; Stylist: Linda Leeming; Make-up: Helaine Alexandrou at Julie Bramwell; Hair: Phillip Fennah for Jo Hansford, 19 Mount Street, London W1.

If summer fashion for men returns to the safari and soldier-of-fortune looks, women's is almost as besotted with the great white hunter. The reason for that is easy to find. Women dressed in anything stolen from the wardrobe of a man of action look provocatively sexy. The clothes are a conscious challenge. So beige is

not, perhaps, quite so self-effacing.

In fact, it has quite a lot to say for itself. It is rich, classy and aggressively sexy too. You could say it is time-honoured as well. A favourite story from the fashion world tells how, when Elsie de Wolfe, the American designer and arbiter of taste, first clapped eyes on the

Acropolis, she was stunned. She had expected it to be white. Guipping, she announced: "It's beige!" Then, triumphantly: "My colour!"

You have to share her relief. One of the glories of civilisation proves, after all, to be in perfectly good taste. More Armani than Versace, don't you think?

It's a wired world

Clive Fewins sees a neglected art thrive in a Gloucestershire town

Celestino Valenti was grappling with what appeared to be a giant octopus. However, within half an hour, it had taken on the shape of a basket - albeit formed from expertly woven lengths of slim galvanised wire twisted round circles of thicker wire.

Rather grandiosely named "The Wireworks", this one-man enterprise has been an unusual attraction in the Gloucestershire town of Cirencester for the past seven years.

Wire creations in myriad shapes and colours hang from the workshop ceiling. And, on the day I visited, the basket Valenti was making soon took its place among the candlestick holders, planters, wall baskets, sconces, fruit and potpourri bowls, trellis work and other items that adorn his adjoining showroom.

The business, tucked away in the centre of the Cotswold town, is a mecca for interior designers, gallery owners and those interested in the almost lost art.

"Wirework flourished in the UK at the turn of the century," says Valenti, 55, who was born in Britain but of Italian parents. He graduated in printmaking from



the Royal College of Art in 1968 and spent much of his subsequent career teaching.

"No late Victorian house of any substance would have been complete without its wire jardinières, window baskets for plants, and, quite often, tables and chairs made from wire," he says.

Valenti creates faithful reproductions of many of these items, but has extended the range to exotic coloured 'candle-bearing' chandeliers, and, for bedrooms, giant creations resembling Montgolfier-style hot air balloons. These hang happily from the ceiling in their own right or can be adapted to hold candles or floral displays.

Prices range from £17 for simple topiary supports to

£1,800 for a large multi-tiered chandelier. Wall baskets and sconces cost from £68 to £288 and jardinières start at £233.

"I have extended the art from the Victorian parlour and conservatory into items for the bedroom and the bathroom," he says.

During his 25 years as a graphic artist, he sold his drawings - to galleries in London, New York, Amsterdam, Basel and Paris. So he is well attuned to the curving and sinuous designs to which wirework lends itself that were his more prudish Victorian and Edwardian forebears.

As well as nurserymen and garden designers, the fashion trade has also been a fertile source of business. Valenti has been commis-

sioned to produce wire display units and mannequin heads in assorted shapes and sizes.

Best of all, however, he likes to sell his products to passers-by or those who commission a piece purely for its ornamental qualities.

"Sculpturally and visually, wirework is a three-dimensional art. My creations speak for themselves, so it is not always necessary to put things in or on them," he says.

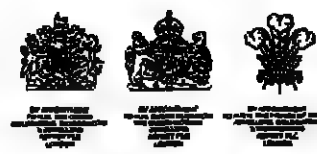
"I like to experiment. While I always stay strictly within the boundaries of classical design, I never know exactly which way a coil is going to turn." He is now venturing into jewellery - especially necklaces.

"However," he points out, "to achieve a really good design with the required lightness and delicacy, but nevertheless with a strong and elegant form, takes a long time. That is unless you receive an SOS as I did recently from a friend. I was asked to design and make a tiara for his daughter the week before her wedding.

"Dare I say it, she looked stunning."

■ Celestino Valenti Wireworks, Workshop 1, Brewery Arts, Cirencester, Glos GL7 1JZ. 01285 657822.

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But the Asprey Daisy necklace will take your breath away. This colourful arrangement is made from 18 carat white gold, amethyst, blue topaz, peridot, yellow hery, pink tourmaline and set with diamonds. At £15,750 it is available only at Asprey, 165-169 New Bond Street, W1. Tel: 0171 493 6767.

FOOD AND DRINK



Not everything in the tea garden is rosy. Pickers have organised and pushed up production costs, making many estates unprofitable

The Hulton Library

The real price of excellence

Giles MacDonogh has trouble getting a decent cuppa in Darjeeling

Darjeeling tea is offered two opportunities to excel. They are called the first and the second "flushes". The first occurs with the first spring growth after the snows melt in the foothills of the Himalayas. Then the chiefly Nepalese women pickers go out with their baskets and pick off two leaves and a bud from the re-emerging bush. The second flush takes place in the early summer, once the plant has grown again. For the rest of the year they pick poor-grade "monsoon tea".

Both the first and the second flushes have their partisans. The Germans and the Japanese, who control the markets for the best quality Darjeeling tea, favour the first flush; the British, in the days when they expressed a strong opinion in these matters, tended to prefer the second. The first is more angular, sharper and sinewy; the second fuller and comparatively mellow. I arrived in Darjeeling at the end of March. El Niño had been flexing its muscles in the Himalayas too. It had been uncharacteristically cold and wet. Only with my arrival did the sun finally emerge, and showed every intention of wanting to stay.

The melodiously named Arya estate is just below the teeming,

sprawling town of Darjeeling. With Happy Valley next door (which sounds distinctly like a lunatic asylum), Arya is one of the highest gardens in the region, with bushes peaking at 6,200 ft, around 1,900 metres. That is promising in itself: the rule is, the higher the tea, the greater the delicacy, the lower it is, the bigger the body.

My sangfroid, however, was shattered on the journey down: there must be better roads in hell. Once or twice I even had to get out of the car to prevent it sliding off into a ravine or cesspit. By the time I reached the garden I was a wreck.

Darjeeling tea-gardens enjoy reputations like wine estates, and like them they often retain their good names long after they deserve. As I came up from the plains I noted the rather tatty, sparse bushes in the two which enjoyed the greatest fame: Saint Margaret's Hope and Cestium. Arya has no such name, yet I could see instantly, or as soon as my legs ceased to shake, that the current team were taking immense care.

A tea garden in Darjeeling rarely makes money these days, the production costs are too high. A kilo of tea requires around Rs150. A paltry £2.30 may not sound like a king's ransom, but it

is a lot more in India. Since the Gurkha independence movement a few years ago, the garden workers are well organised. Some people maintain that they will finish by closing Darjeeling. A handful of estates have already shut up shop.

Many garden-owners run their assembly. It covers around 370 acres (160 hectares) of steep slope, rising to 5,500 ft. Here and there you spot the thick trunks of the Assam bush, which tends to produce darker, coarser tea in Darjeeling. Like Arya, however, Bannockburn is engaged in a planting programme. The new clones have been chosen for their potential quality, and not, as so often was the case in the past, for their higher yields.

Good tea is too cheap. A pot of high quality tea can still cost less than a bottle of cola

He value - a little like racehorses in the west. I was assured that Arya's new owner was not expecting much of a profit, but he wanted the best.

With quality in mind, he had given instructions to his young team to improve the tea in the garden itself, so that you see none of that gappy scruffiness which marks out some better

known estates. He has invested Rs7m, more than £100,000, in the estate and factory too, and put down new China clones producing superbly aromatic tea.

Bannockburn estate has a name which should endear it to the Scots: they could serve it as the house Darjeeling in their new assembly. It covers around 370 acres (160 hectares) of steep slope, rising to 5,500 ft. Here and there you spot the thick trunks of the Assam bush, which tends to produce darker, coarser tea in Darjeeling. Like Arya, however, Bannockburn is engaged in a planting programme. The new clones have been chosen for their potential quality, and not, as so often was the case in the past, for their higher yields.

Phoobering is under the same ownership as Bannockburn, but rising a little higher to 6,000 ft above sea level. There is as much as a third Assam here, but the manager isolates the different hybrids: China, Assam, and Clonal and makes three very different styles of tea. The new clones are impressive again. The unapologetically named P312 makes light, scented teas with a whiff of lemon and coconut.

Good tea is too cheap. The manager at Phoobering told me that one of his first flushes sold for Rs3,000 (£45) a kilo at a Cal-

cutta auction this year but that it had cost him half as much to make. Even at prices like these a pot of tea does not work out dear: still less than a bottle of cola.

I discussed the problems of Darjeeling tea with Naren Dutta, the genial former army officer who runs the Planters' Association. He tapped his pipe and smiled. Higher yields were the answer; not necessarily bigger producing clones, but more bushes to the hectare. I thought of the tightly packed garden at Arya, then of some of the more randomly planted gardens I had seen. His was the long view. The 1980s with their endless political wrangles had been much worse: "In 150 years only three gardens have become extinct."

What Dutta was prepared to concede was that Darjeeling was in dire need of promotion. Too little had been done to stress its quality. A common or garden packet of Darjeeling might contain 80 per cent poor quality monsoon tea, and the rest, who knows? Even in the town of Darjeeling itself there was nowhere you could go for an authentic cup of tea which came with the imprimatur of the Planters' Association. More effort is needed to explain to the public why they must pay more for Darjeeling tea: the price of excellence.

In vindaloo veritas

Giles MacDonogh rises to a very tricky Saturday night challenge

The availability of wine in India is not what it was. In writer William Hick-ey's day Calcutta was awash with claret, port and madeira. None of these is easy to find now, and for the time being the richer Indian is more or less addicted to whisky and soda. Only the most persistent industrial "juicing-plants" succeed in getting their wines into a few top hotel restaurants: Gallo's, Lancers and Mateus, and various dodgy, sweet Germans and Australians are about as good as you are likely to find.

In a country where water can be risky, beer is a better bet. Imported beer, at least, has a long history. In the last century IPA, or India Pale Ale, made the fortunes of companies such as Bass, and indeed, the town of Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire. I suspect, however, that the barley broth was not intended to grace the dining table of British officers or merchants. Beer, the accepted counterpoint to Indian food - Saturday night means curry and lager - is a more recent partnership and the idea almost certainly originated in Britain.

Production has now transferred itself to the sub-continent and even those states which intermittently decree prohibition allow you to drink beer if you are staying in a hotel. Beer-drinking in India has a quaint charm: waiters have a habit of offering you the litre bottle to touch before they pour, to make sure the temperature is just right.

I have often longed for wine in India. With all those pulses in the food, beer is simply gas on gas, especially sweet, frothy, Bangalore beer. After a few days it becomes too much. The question is whether wine is a more suitable companion for such highly spiced food?

The issue is again new: after the 1857 Mutiny, the British rejected native culture and Raj food was only moderately spicy. Once again the answers are coming from Britain rather than India itself. Indian restaurants are seeking to trade up and at the same time rid themselves of the lager louts who pile in at 11pm to continue their evening's toying. A proper wine list is a way of making the public aware that you take cooking seriously.

One man who is at the forefront of the movement to introduce wine in Indian restaurants is Cyrus Todiwala, a Bombay-born Parsi who trained partly in Goa. Todiwala readily admits that cooking is an odd profession for a Parsi. They tend to be rich and exclusive. They employ cooks, they do not sully their hands in the kitchen.

India had its own cooking sub-castes, which partly explains the slow development of regional cookery both in Britain and India itself. Parsis eat Parsi food, Marwaris, Marwari food, wherever they ply their trade. Traditionally, Goans prepared the food in Parsi households. Bengalis cooked on P&O liners. The Gujaratis had their own specific caste dedicated to vegetarian cooking. South Indian vegetarian food is available everywhere. They all have their skills, they all hog their different corners of the kitchen. At the Café Spice, Todiwala speaks to his team in seven languages.

The Café Spice Namaste inhab-

its a gaily painted old courthouse on the bleak eastern fringes of the City of London. Dining with Todiwala I was able to try out the food and wine combinations elaborated by him in conjunction with Joseph Berkman of Berkman Wine Cellars.

Some monkfish tikkas came, but it was less the spice than the accompanying raw onions which KO'd the Sancerre rosé, however nice. It was better with the Hyderabad lamb samosa, some duck fillet and a delicate Goan *goshio cafral*, even if it struggled with a Goan chicken *piri-piri*. This preparation is rather less compromising than the standard Portuguese version.

The answer was a distinctly sweet Australian Chardonnay. By itself no one would have accused this of being a refined wine. Indeed, it came dangerously close to the Gallo's *et al* which you might be offered in India. It is the old story: a touch of sugar counteracts the effect of the chilli. It begged the question whether you should serve "good" wine with Indian food. Successful too was an "Indian" dry white, which accompanied a lovely dish of ostrich gizzard.

This remained on the table for a Goan fish curry. Todiwala dis-

Would you open a grand cru burgundy for a dish such as Goan beef with chillies?

missed many of the misconceptions about Indian food. With 4,000 miles of coastline, Indians are great fish and seafood eaters; Christian Goans gorge themselves on snails and pork; Kerala is not the hottest place for food, that is Andhra Pradesh.

I had some mild Kashmiri lamb from an elaborate Moghul recipe with a hard boiled egg, and some Goan strips of beef with chillies. This was paired with a South African pinotage. Todiwala agreed that oakiness was no use at all with food, not even spicy hot food, but he felt that soft tannin had the effect of cushioning the blows from the chillies. Again I wondered how far you would go? Would you open a grand cru burgundy for dishes such as these, however ragal?

Dessert came in the form of a Goan *bebinca* - coconut milk pancakes baked in layers - carrot *halwa* and rose *kulfi*. Todiwala brought out a glass of spiced wine, a latter-day version of the hippocras drunk in England during the Middle Ages. I folded my napkin, content to have learned that the bigger, sweeter wines, of the new world in particular, are tolerant of curry spices, and vice versa. I looked around the tables at my fellow diners. Not many had got the message: They were drinking Cobra beer, brewed in Bedfordshire. It is going to take a little more time I thought and, right on cue, the cannibal cries of a horde of lager drinkers announced their presence in the next room.

■ *Café Spice Namaste, 16 Prescott Street, London E1. Tel: 0171-483 2842 and at 247 Lavender Hill, SW11, 0171-738 1666. Prepare to pay around £25 a head, including wine.*

Motoring

Big cat not quite up to scratch

Stuart Marshall tests Ford's Cougar and finds its performance competent rather than exciting

The Ford Puma is a Fiesta-based sports two-plus-two that every young driver lusts after. It looks exciting, goes uncommonly well and is reasonably affordable. When its bigger brother, the Mondeo-based Cougar, was unveiled at the Geneva motor show last March, it drew admiring crowds who assumed it would be everything the Puma was only more so.

So it came as a surprise to discover in a sub-tropical Rhineland last week that it is not. Puma conceals its close relationship to a modest family hatchback so well that it can be regarded as a genuine sports car to be compared with the likes of the MG.

Cougar, though styled with similar flair to the Puma, is much more of a sports-tourer version of that

favourite of fleet managers and family motorists, the Ford Mondeo, and shares 70 per cent of its components.

Explaining the rationale behind Cougar, Ian McAllister, Ford's chairman and managing director, says it

It should take care of those who are not quite as good as they think they are

was designed for enthusiasts who expect a car to be rewarding and exciting to drive, stylish and convenient to own. I will go along with the rewarding, stylish and convenient but I rate the Cougar as competent rather

than exciting to drive. Two versions of the US-built Cougar will reach Europe at the end of August. The one expected to be the best-seller in Britain, with 60 per cent of sales, has a 2.0-litre, 4-cylinder engine made at Ford's Bridgend plant in South Wales, and manual transmission without the option. The version I drove in Germany has a 2.5-litre V6 engine and a choice of 5-speed manual or 4-speed automatic transmission.

The V6 develops 170 horsepower at 6,250rpm and maximum torque (pulling power) is produced at a fairly high 4,250rpm. Not surprisingly, although the V6 was smooth enough at modest speeds in high gear, it had to be allowed to spin freely to give of its best.

Like Puma, Cougar has air intake and exhaust systems that produce a sporty song



Ford's elegant and sporty Cougar: made in the US, but designed with European drivers in mind

when the engine is working hard. This was fine when changing up from fourth to fifth at 80mph (130kph), or holding 120mph on the autobahn but when accelerating from lower speeds, the engine could sound uncharacteristically coarse. Because Cougar's body shell is stiffer than that of a Mon-

deo 4-door saloon, it was possible to firm up the suspension and fit squatter 50 series Michelin tyres without any real loss of ride comfort. Handling is not quite in the Puma's polo pony class. Even so, Cougar holds the road and corners well enough to satisfy a skilled enthusiast. It should also

take care of those who may not be quite as good as they think they are.

Anti-lock brakes are standard and a traction control system is available. Should help protect the front-seat occupants from side-on, as well as frontal impacts.

All coupé buyers are con-

scious of a car's looks. Why else, a cynic might say, should one pay more for less, because elegant coupés - and Cougar is a lithe and handsome beast - are fairly cramped in the back.

The interior is trendy but tasteful. No manufacturer installs more user-friendly radios than Ford.

The widely spaced buttons are easily seen and can even be understood by people without a science degree. The V6 Cougar's power-adjusted seats were form-fitting and pleasantly resilient. The tailgate has an internal release and the massive boot can be extended by lowering the rear-seat backrest.

Tyre roar was not a problem on Germany's mainly hilliard-table road surfaces. Even at speeds lawful only on the autobahn, wind noise was muted. The power-operated sunroof does not open very wide because the Cougar's top is curvy but it creates so little aerodynamic commotion that it can be enjoyed at up to 60mph.

Average fuel consumptions should range from about 34mpg (3.3/100km) for a sensibly driven manual 4-cylinder model to 29mpg (3.7/100km) for a V6 automatic. The two-pedal V6 is only marginally thirstier than the manual version.

Ford executives are not being drawn on what the British prices will be when the car arrives after the August registration rush. All they would say was that Cougar would be competitive. As its main rivals are the Fiat and Peugeot 406 coupés, an educated guess puts the cheapest four-speed version at about £29,000 and the range-topping V6 automatic at £34,000.

COUNTRY PROPERTY

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PROPERTY

A portfolio steeped in learning

Gerald Cadogan goes to college for some lessons in investment strategies that date back several centuries

Oxford and Cambridge colleges, like the Church and the Crown, have to care for investments that have been in the same hands for more than seven centuries.

It demands a macroscopic view to manage an endowment that will ride out temporary changes in the property and financial markets, and meet the colleges' responsibilities to provide the best education and maintain their historic buildings.

Investing widely is the judgment of Clifford Webb, Bursar of Merton College, Oxford, which has half its endowment in property. "Then at least you'll get something right," he says. "I part company here with those who say one should be solely in the stock market."

He cites Merton's gain of £550,000 from divesting the New Malden estate in Surrey that founder Walter de Merton

bestowed on the college in 1264. Much of the profit, "which took nearly 700 years to come through", was compensation under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 for including the land in the Green Belt (and excluding it from development gains).

With the money, the college erected buildings in Oxford, and put the rest of it back into farmland. (Until 1961 the college statutes forbade them from investing in equities.)

Thanks to improved productivity, the lower grade land bought at between £15 and £40 an acre has proved a fine investment. But the grade 1 land bought for a heady £100 an acre has not given such a good return. The estates bursar of the day thought, reasonably enough, it would be a good investment decision to buy prize-winning farms.

Merton is not afraid to stick to traditional ways if they achieve

results. John Glog, the current college land agent, is one of a rare and old-fashioned breed - an independent operator, calling in services as he needs them. He used to work in land agency and farm management with Strutt & Parker.

Although Merton's wealth is far less than that of Trinity College, Cambridge, it is one of the richer Oxford colleges. Agricultural holdings of 14,000 acres produced £204,830 in gross rent in the year ending July 31, 1997. (The college accounts are public information). And non-farming gross rent in 1996/97 was £380,644, with dividends and interest just over £1,338,000.

The money is used for the general purposes of the college, which has been in deficit for the past three years, says Webb, with heavy spending on improving the library and accommodation.

The legacy of the past still governs what Merton can do with its

property. The principal assets are its farmland and the remainder of the ancient Holywell Manor estate in central Oxford.

This estate once ran from outside the north city wall to Northam Gardens, but much of it has since gone to the University (for the Parks - famous for its cricket ground - science area and English and law libraries) or other colleges, including St Catherine's - the second college founded on Merton land. The first was King's College, Cambridge, where Merton gave the land to its founder Henry VI, who offered property in Somerset in return.

Merton still owns plenty of old houses on the Holywell estate, which are worth a lot, says Webb. "But, since we do not intend to sell them - although we may release some of the estate for educational purposes - capital values are irrelevant."

The college improves them as

they become vacant, costing an average of £100,000 a property. They are used for college accommodation or let on assured short-term tenancies. "But the rentals are not huge, nothing like London," says Webb.

The farms are broadly split between ancient founder's land (mostly in Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire and Surrey) and that bought between 1933 and 1948 (in Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire) from the New Malden proceeds.

Merton has decided not to buy more land except to top up holdings, and will not sell except with vacant possession. "Otherwise, we should have to take a 40 per cent discount for sitting tenants," says Webb.

Glog counts 25 "serious" farmer-tenants on agricultural tenancies, with one on a farm business

tenancy. "Many are second generation tenants, and some third or prospective thirds." Often they work other land than that which they lease from Merton. Rents are moving up but, as always, lag behind profitability.

In December, the tenants attend a rent audit dinner (and pay the rent). They enjoy being with the college, Glog thinks, partly for the long history of the institution, and partly because their money goes to education and research, "and not to fill someone's private coffers".

Every summer, the Warden and Fellows visit them and their farms on a five-year cycle of "progresses" - a practice of medieval origins.

The college owns a little commercial property, notably the motel at its former Peartree Farm by the Oxford ring road, where it takes a share of the turnover.

"Given our historic holdings,

we are not big enough investors to buy much that is new," says Webb, "but we can invest in pooled funds."

The most likely development gain would be in Surrey, where Merton still owns 1,200 acres. A lot of it is on the edge of towns, in the Green Belt, which might be released one day for housing.

But, driving on the M25 recently, Webb noticed how much bare land was still available in the area.

"Thinking that housing is going to arrive on land you happen to own, it's like winning the lottery." But one can promote the chances of one's land, says Glog, by pushing for its inclusion in long-term local structure plans.

But for the time being, Merton's 420 students are lucky that there is still income from land that Walter de Merton gave in the 13th century to support them in their studies.

On the Move

Supply of flats holds back rents

Anne Spackman finds tenants are more demanding as the number of properties increases

Rents in London are flattening out, as more and more of last year's off-plan investment purchases come to completion. Hamptons reports an 8 per cent increase in supply in the first quarter of this year compared with the same period in 1997. At the same time, tenant numbers have fallen slightly. Hamptons predicts tenants will become more demanding and rents will be kept in check.

In the City of London, where the tiny residential market is dominated by investor landlords, the sudden influx of new rental flats has led to costly void periods, averaging 10 weeks. Hamptons reports that in the last quarter the average

lords are selling up, because house prices have risen, creating a shortage of stock, which in turn is pushing rents up.

However, their watchword is quality. Across the country, agents report that tenants are increasingly demanding better quality properties and willing to pay more for them. "Must be well presented", is a commonly-used phrase.

Spring crop

Spring has produced its first crop of good country houses, after six months in which the market lay dormant. Offers are already coming in for The Old Rectory at Lower Bampton, near Salisbury in Wiltshire, an unusually pretty house, in a particularly lovely riverside setting.

As well as the gardens, there are 17 acres of wild pasture and watermeadows, with single and double bank fishing on the River Nadder. Strutt and Parker in Salisbury (01722-328741) have set a guide of £675,000.

Potential buyers should be aware that another lovely old rectory, 20 miles away at Pimperne, near Blandford Forum in Dorset, has just sold for "well in excess" of its £525,000 guide price. The eight-bedroom Georgian house, in 2½ acres of gardens, was sold by FPD Savills at a telephone auction.

This is becoming an increasingly popular method of selling houses for which there are a few serious bidders. The estate agent sets a time and date and holds a line open for each bidder, then conducts the auction as he would in a room. "Buyers prefer dealing this way than by sealed bids, because they can make their genuinely best offer," says Robin Gould



The Pokeswell Manor, listed Grade II with two lakes, a stream and a 17th century gatehouse



Bratton Farm House: set to attract several offers



The Old Rectory at Lower Bampton: lovely riverside setting



White Hall Estate: with an income of around £40,000 a year

Outside London, the rise in house prices is pushing up rents

was reduced to six weeks. Knight Frank reports fluctuations in the rental market, with rents for one-bedroom flats held by its Sloane Street office falling from £400 to £333 a week, but rising in its Hampstead office from £234 to £325 a week. These sharp differences are likely to be based on a small sample size and can be heavily influenced by one new development. What is clear is that the continuous rise in rents over the past couple of years is over. Outside London the picture is very different. The latest rental report from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors says land-

of FPD Savills in Salisbury. "The whole thing is usually over in 30 seconds flat. It's a relatively painless procedure."

Another house which looks set to attract several offers is Bratton Farm House near Wincanton in Somerset. A period stone house in an edge-of-village location, with nearly six acres of land, it is

exactly the kind of property in short supply and high demand. Agents Strutt and Parker in Salisbury report keen interest from buyers being forced ever further along the A303 by high prices. For this property the guide price is £475,000.

In the next price bracket John D Wood in Oxford (01235-311522) is selling the

White Hall Estate at Minster Lovell with a guide of £375,000. At the centre of the property is a five-bedroom Cornish stone house with staff flat and formal gardens. In addition there is a pair of holiday cottages and a low-key nursery business, which together provide an income of around £40,000 a year. Road noise - an

increasingly common problem in country houses - features here, from the A40 two fields away.

A more traditional small estate is being sold in Dorset, about five miles from Bournemouth. Unless Farm at Corscombe sits in the middle of 140 acres of its own land, with a trout lake and stable yard. The six-bedroom house

requires some modernisation. Michael de Pelet in Sherborne (01935-812236) and Knight Frank (0171-629 5171) are asking £250,000 for the whole.

Down in the south of Dorset FPD Savills' Wimborne office (01202-887331) is selling the Grade I listed Pokeswell Manor. In its five acres of grounds lie two lakes, a

stream and a 17th century gatehouse leading into a walled garden with lavender hedges. The six reception rooms are rich in wood paneling and original fireplaces. Again, there is a slight problem with road noise from the A353, but not enough to have stopped the first offer coming in. The guide price is £1m.

At home

Holiday cottage has to earn its upkeep

Sally Smith gives the benefit of her experience in letting a second home to holidaymakers

As his wife toured the bedrooms, the holiday-maker leaned across to my husband. "Like to go away early in the year," he confided. "Get it over with." Such enthusiasm sometimes makes us wonder why people take holidays at all, when they could instead remain in the security of familiar surroundings; but that almost everyone at some time or another feels the urge to get away from it all provides us with a useful income and some tax advantages, thanks to our holiday home.

And our weekend cottage has to earn its upkeep. For, once the initial romance has worn off, the reality of endlessly rotting window sills and paint-scraping becomes apparent. We had not intended to go into formal letting. We started by offering it to friends and relations, who,

after three or four visits, felt their contribution of a bottle of wine and a bunch of flowers was insufficient payment. They were happier once they had settled on a fixed payment and felt they could book the cottage whenever they wanted without feeling that they were asking for a favour.

Later, we called a local agent for an idea of what we could charge outsiders. He offered to put us on his books and was willing to let us know if we did not want for ourselves and our friends. At that time, this was an unusual practice; now, it is virtually unheard of.

Understandably, letting agencies do not want to have to find takers for the third week in January, or the second week in November, the owner having begged all the bank holidays and summer months. Some agencies will only take on the property if

the owner is allowed just two or three weeks in the year; others ask for exclusive use in the prime months of July and August.

We have settled for this latter arrangement, because we prefer to be at our cottage out-of-season. But for

Today, you are lucky if the vacuum cleaner has been pushed round

some it can be one of the main drawbacks to this kind of letting. The benefit is that an agent, who will be marketing a number of other properties, offers a far greater spread of advertising. For those going it alone, a small advert in one quar-

terly magazine might account for two weeks letting income.

Through letting, our cottage qualified as a furnished holiday let (FHL) for tax purposes. To qualify as an FHL, explains Jonathan Davies of accountants Chavereys in Ashford, Kent, a property must be available for letting 140 days in the year, and actually let for 70 days.

Any single let is limited to 30 days. This brings it within the category of commercial letting and certain tax benefits - the greatest being that tax relief is available on interest on a loan to buy such a property. And it is not restricted to £30,000.

FHL owners can also claim capital allowances for plant and machinery - in other words, replacement furniture and fittings. Davies advises maintaining a record of any spending on capital works, such as new windows, as it can be used to

help to offset the capital gains tax (CGT) which accrues on a second home when it is sold.

For some tax purposes, FHL rental income is treated as a trade, so any losses which arise can be set against other sources of income, including a salary, though if there are sustained losses the Inland Revenue can question whether the property is being seriously let.

Alternatively, tax relief can be obtained on any profits by offsetting pension premiums paid. Council tax and water rates are also allowable expenses to be set against letting income - as are the costs of cleaning and keyholding, but that is the simple part.

Finding someone to clean to a good standard and who is prepared to do so most Saturdays throughout the summer is quite another matter. The very best clean-

ers can, just about, service two properties between the 10am departure and 4pm arrival, but if the job is to be done properly, you are looking at one house per cleaner and that rapidly soaks up the available task force in any area.

That the place is thoroughly clean, far cleaner than anyone would demand were they at home, is vital. Agents say poor cleaning draws the most complaints. There was a time when the previous occupants would have done much of the cleaning before departure, but now you are lucky if the vacuum cleaner has been pushed round.

Power and heating, we have found, are better dealt with by a coin-in-the-slot meter; without, you have to take meter readings on arrival and departure and the ensuing maths can be complicated and collection troublesome.



Equipment and furnishing of holiday cottages varies considerably. Follow tourist board advice and you are in for enormous expense. This kind of hotel standard is not necessary. Indeed it can be intimidating, especially for those with children who will spend their stay worrying about breakages and spills.

After much debate, we removed anything precious and ensured that we complied with the new, stringent

fire regulations, but otherwise left the cottage as we had furnished and equipped it for ourselves. Priorities included plenty of books and a full battery de cuisine.

In doing this we are by no means attracting the top rentals, but then we have not spent vast sums either. Neither do we fill the place to the brim. The cottage will sleep six and even seven at a push, but we confine it to five to give everyone space.

GARDENING

Weather puts the heat on Chelsea

Robin Lane Fox tells how the gardeners coped

A hot start to the Chelsea Flower Show made life abnormally difficult for many of the exhibitors at this week's jamboree. Plants had been pushed under glass to counter the cold weather until a week ago. Outdoors, my heart lies with the poor souls who had to construct gardens from nothing and then keep fresh plants imported into hot sun.

The makers of a butterfly garden reminded us how they alone moved in 29 trees, laboured for 140 man-days, carved 40 tons of soil and 40 tons of rocks, travelled 25,000 miles and spent 37 hours on the phone. The allocation of a site with an exposed left flank did nothing to help their exhibit, but I thought they made an excellent job with their bankside landscape, at least in the placing of the rocks and waterfalls.

The designers, Paul Dyer and Marney Hall, made a good job of the difficult commission, combining apparently natural turf with an artificial display of rock. Perhaps they knew better than I in planting annual heliotropes and spring-flowering ranunculus as flowers which butterflies love.

Inside the tent, the show was full of so many brilliant turns that I would rather interweave them into subsequent articles. Peter Beales made a magnificent job of showing old-fashioned rambling roses, including the yellowish-white Claire Jacquier, which has never appeared at Chelsea since its origin in 1888, and the large-flowered and deeper-coloured Bessie Hill.

There was wonderful artistry in Gieble Cottage Nursery's display of clear-coloured water plants, mixed in with beautifully displayed purple foliage from Clematis recta.

I had a field day with a newcomer, Jimmy Jones from Wales, who is evidently the emerging king of nematodes and many diascias, which deserve an article to themselves.

Many exhibitors tried for a cool, semi-wild look with a hint of water and shade, but I thought the best ran through the centre of Jacques Anand's magnificent display of tulips and related

There were the usual visual catastrophes, but more really ambitious gardens

bulbs. Defying the seasons, he delighted us with anemones, Solomon's Seal and enchanting use of the pink and white forms of Bleeding Heart.

Outdoors, there were some of the usual visual catastrophes and exercises in public relations. There was, however, a wider range of really ambitious and carefully considered gardens, far more than I remember in the 1970s when formal stone rockeries and great clumps of rhododendrons made up the supporting cast to one or two outstanding designs. This year, the best were spread more widely, good in different parts.

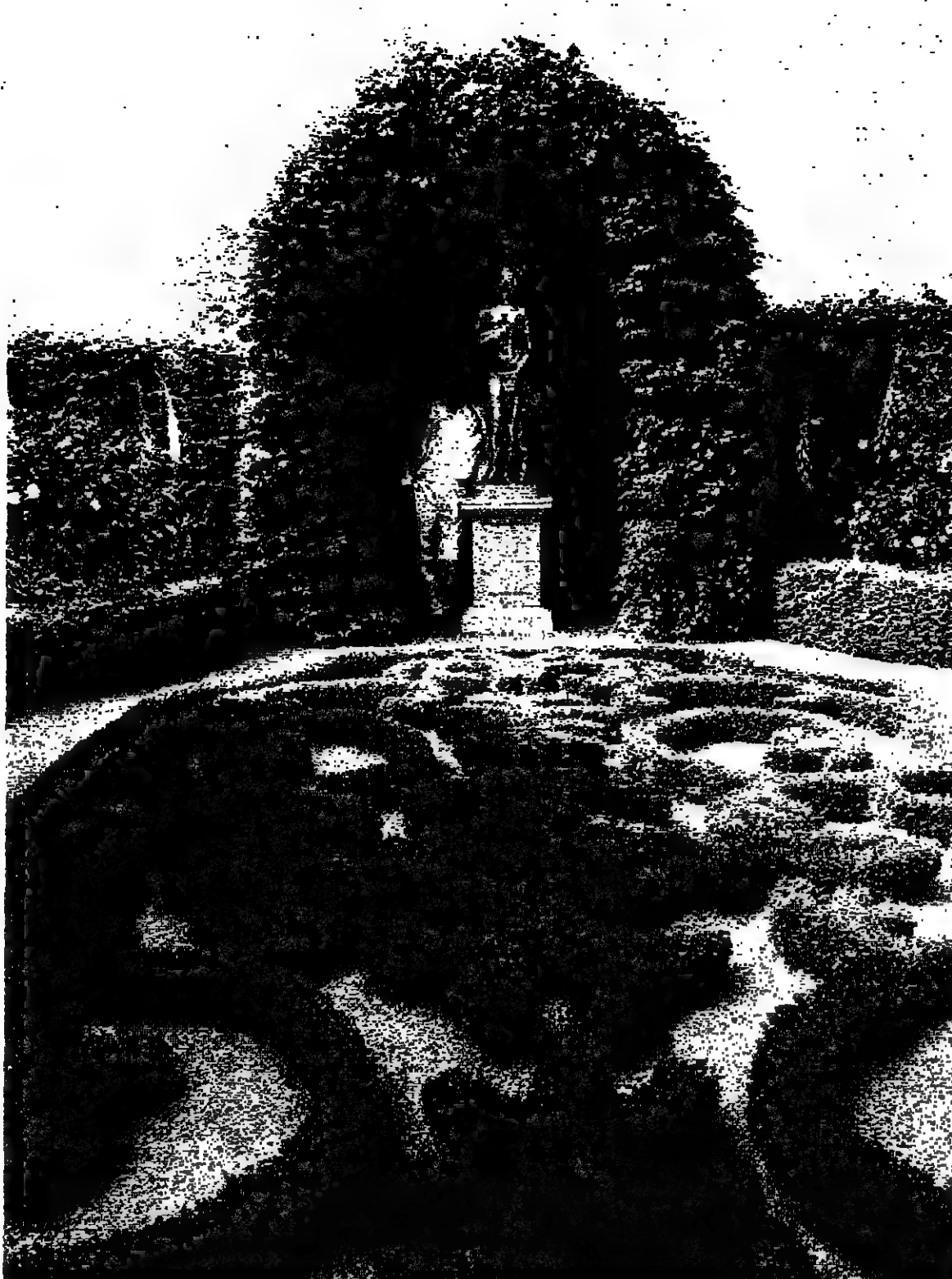
The experts' favourite was designed by Arabella Lennox-Boyd who refuted criticisms that her style of planting was tending to become too pretentious. She laid out a formal water garden with particularly bold and clear lines, viewed across a bank strewn of mown grass and running back into pleached trees and two flanking borders of extremely well combined shades of yellow and white, and the better end of the family of flowering grasses.

Almost everybody loved her central fountain which sprang from an upright rectangle of modern metal, it certainly caught the eye, but I thought that it looked too much like tin foil in motion and could not have borne it within view at my own home. Shows, however, are anything but home.

Somebody clearly could more than bear the sight of the central sculpture shown by Chanel of Old Bond Street in a dark green arbour. The statue glistened with a coating of 23 carat gold, another visual shock for cynics about sculpture at Chelsea. It was inspired by the famous Venus of the Medici at Blenheim Palace whose full female nudity so delighted salacious Grand Tourists in the 18th century.

The golden copy so delighted a Chelsea visitor that for a donation of around £20,000 to the National Trust, it is apparently destined to be installed in the restored garden at Stowe.

The designers insist that the statue in French gardens in the 18th century were sometimes gilded, a fact which startles me as much as the discovery that most ancient Greek statues were highly painted would have startled admirers of their pristine whiteness in the 19th century.



Tom Stuart-Smith 'brilliantly devised a parterre in clipped box which spells out the letter C for Chanel'

After the first shock, I rather liked the old vulgarity of gold against green foliage, but few of us will wish to risk it in today's under-world, rampant among statuary above ground. The surrounding planting was

appropriately white, including good white lilac, irises and camellias.

White plants against green leaves is becoming a Chelsea cliché in the gardens on which most is spent. A distinguished example was the

central parterre of clipped box which Tom Stuart-Smith had brilliantly devised and spaced. It spelt out the letter C for Chanel in its curves and convinced me that I would consult the designer if I wanted a similar box

pattern and knew nothing much about gardening myself.

The centrepiece for many visitors was the three-part design called Impressions of Highgrove, sponsored by Cartier, the luxury goods

maker, and Harpers & Queen magazine. It claimed to echo ideas favoured by the Prince of Wales, the wilder style of gardening, the use of thyme and herbs along paths and paving, organic vegetables and another formal parterre of box, less handsome than Chanel's.

I liked the standard vines in terracotta pots, the clumps of thyme, the vegetables and the concluding small enclosure of the wider meadow look. The ornate oak seat in a fantastically frilly pattern at the end of the garden attracted many viewers, but I thought it was over the top.

The dull purple-leaved trees of prunus were a pity in the vegetable garden, and the main visual blot was the dominance of the two shades in the front section, which are said to be destined for Highgrove itself. They look like a cross between a Christmas crèche and Noah's ark in section. Highly meaningful sentiments had been carved on the seat about "seeing a world in a grain of sand". The late Sir Laurens van der Post would probably have found it very true.

Personally, I preferred the nearby royal garden, patronised by Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan of Abu Dhabi. The central fountain was enclosed in too high a surround, but it had much more conviction than the Highgrove apology.

The Islamic version was a full Room of Life, flanked by magnificent palms and orange trees which were the most adventurous boundary to any Chelsea garden. Global warming has made them a risk worth taking. The accompanying jets of water sprang out too far from china models of falcons in the trees, but I liked the highly ornate ironwork and do not feel sorry for Tittenhurst Park in Berkshire where the structure will be re-erected.

The designer of the Daily Telegraph garden opposite assured us in her publicity, that "Eden is a feminine condition", thereby ruffling the feathers of at least half of garden designers. Paradise, in my view, was nearer to hand on a hot, Chelsea day in Sheikh Zayed's unusual arrangement of plants and spaces.

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TRAVEL

A taste of Togo's French flavour

Sarah Murray goes on a day trip to Ghana's tiny neighbour

The immigration desk at Togo's border with Ghana is easy to miss. The officers manning their small wooden table down a passage of shade between two shacks, and while this is sensible, given the burning sun and stifling humidity, it confuses the arriving visitors.

"Madame, Ici!" A voice calls out, an elegant hand beckons and a ballpoint pen is tapped officiously on a pile of dog-eared papers. So this is it. We have said goodbye to dusty Ghanaian towns where the Psalm 23 Spraying Shop and the My God Is Able Plumbing Works rub shoulders with Shell petrol stations that look as if they have been plucked straight off a British motorway. We are preparing to shake hands with the French-speaking Africa of fresh bread, strong coffee and asymmetrically planned capital cities.

Passports are yielded and in an impenetrable version of French the official demands my "date de naissance", "motif du voyage" ("Affaires" I tell him with a wink) and "durée du séjour" ("Un jour seulement." I say and am correctly informed that one day in Togo is simply not enough). Stamps are

placed solemnly on visas and we have traversed the chaotic junction between English-speaking Africa and Afrique Francophone with remarkable ease.

Such smooth passage comes as a surprise. Memories of instability and violence are alarmingly fresh – between 1989 and 1991 Togo's security forces clashed with anti-government demonstrators, and armed police still patrol the streets of Lomé, the capital.

General Gnassingbé Eyadéma, Togo's president, has been at the receiving end of so many assassination attempts (16 in 30 years) that he never goes anywhere without his personal chef and several suitcases of food. On a recent trip to Vietnam the general checked into his five-star hotel only after it promised him two cubic metres of refrigerator space for his three-day stay.

Ordinary Togolese are less fussy about what they eat. The first encounter of this short trip is with an entrepreneurial Togolese who, as the taxi shudders to a halt by a set of traffic lights, holds aloft a creature looking remarkably like a huge dead rat that the driver insists is a "poulet mangé". I pass up the opportunity of sampling this particular delicacy – an agouti, as I later



Fabulous fabrics bring an air of party-time to streets around Lomé's Rue du Grand Marché

discover – and we move on.

But where is Togo anyway? Even on my map Ghana's tiny neighbour is hard to spot. In spite of having only four letters, its name is too wide to fit within its borders and must be spelt out in the Gulf of Guinea, attached to land by a thin cartographer's line. Its present form – a narrow finger pushing up into the West African interior – was created by the division after the second world war of German Togoland into British-controlled West Togo (now part of Ghana) and East Togo, a French territory and today the Republic of Togo.

A sizeable chunk of a day in this tiny republic should be spent at the Palm Beach Hotel in Lomé. After all, it

will take at least a morning to appreciate fully the art works adorning the walls of its Le Barou restaurant. Kitsch floral studies share the glory with an unusual version of the Mona Lisa holding what looks suspiciously like a slip of paper. Plastic roses sway in the breeze created by a huge air-conditioner that has reduced the fiery Togolese temperature to that of an over-efficient fridge. With its ornate mirrors, Alpine landscapes in lurid colours and wall coverings that look more like worn carpets, the Palm Beach reeks of the 1980s.

Except that it was built in mid-1960. This is revealed by Michel Avouli. He is a beady-eyed shipping agent whose age is betrayed only

by a sprinkling of white curls that make him look as if he has accidentally brushed his head against a freshly painted ceiling. The hotel, he says, once buzzed with activity until Togo's brand of troubles stalled economic progress. Today the Palm Beach is home only to the occasional Air Afrique air hostess and a handful of adventurous businessmen.

Descending from its air-conditioned heights into thick humidity, we head down Rue du Grand Marché. In narrow streets bulging with produce, a party must be about to start for everyone is in fabulous costumes of brightly coloured fabric decorated with outlandish motifs that range from huge flowers to hair-

brushes and spoons. However, further penetration of the market reveals scant evidence of festivities. Clearly exotic garb is simply what one wears in these parts.

One's head is the display unit for everything from trays of fruit to collections of wooden stools (up to eight can be carried, cleverly locked together, dwarfing their vendor like some giant crown). Babies join the throng, neatly bound in swathes of fabric that match their mothers' outfits. These small infant parcels are often little more than a bump on a woman's back, while from the front they can only be detected by the tiny feet sticking up either side of her waist.

Beyond the confines of Lomé, a road lined with thick palm oil, cacao and coffee plantations and teak forests leads to Kpalimé. The modest houses and dusty colonial structures of Togo's fourth largest city sit at the pleasant altitude of 250 metres (820ft), with Mount Agou, the country's highest peak, providing a backdrop. Further north, elephants roam through the Malifacassa mountains and the thickly wooded savanna of Fazao National Park. But sadly, one day in Togo cannot accommodate such pleasures. Early next day we are looking for another small wooden desk at the border with Benin, only an hour's drive from where we started. A hand beckons, a voice calls out: "Madame, Ici!"

Reviving a beach loved to death

Hanalei Bay is a classic tourist spot that became a classic tourist problem.

It is a horseshoe-shaped bay on the coast of Oahu, the most popular Hawaiian island. At the head, under cliffs and palm trees, is a strip of golden sand. The arms of the bay keep the sea mostly calm, and visitors can walk into the water to see the big attraction: a coral reef.

Sometime in the 1980s, says Alan Hong, manager of what is now the Hanalei Bay Nature Preserve, the bay started to appear in guidebooks as a must-see sight. Tourists came by the coachload from Waikiki to stroll around a reef which is so close to shore that fish swim unharmed between their legs. Snorkellers can gaze on green sea turtles, a threatened species.

But, as happens at fragile tourist sites around the world, they began to kill what they came to see. In 1987 the bay attracted 3.5m visitors, more than Yosemite or Yellowstone national parks. The sand turned grey and became covered in litter; the water swam with sun-oli; the reef began to die.

How the Hawaiians tackled the problem, and reversed it, provides a promising lesson for other tourist attractions.

Concerned residents formed the Friends of Hanalei Bay organisation to lobby for measures to save the bay (and to volunteer to enforce them); the university came on board to help educate the public; the city/country of Honolulu agreed something needed to be done; and a management plan was drawn up. Hong, a firm

believer in sustainable tourism, took on the top job. And earlier this year, to everyone's surprise and delight, the plan won the top British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow award.

The main success has been in bringing down the number of visitors to in a year. This usually means about 4,000 a day, and is partly regulated by closing the gate when the 300-space carpark at the top of the cliff is full – often early in the day. Those turned away can always try again later, or come by city bus or taxi.

Part of the deterrence was financial: it costs \$3 to walk down to the beach (free for Hawaiians) and \$1 to park a car – not enough to price it out of anyone's reach, but sufficient to make them think twice. And coaches are no longer permitted to park all day; they may stop only for a quarter of an hour so passengers can glimpse the bay from the cliff-top.

The restrictions are having an effect. Visitor numbers have dropped, the beach is clean, the fish and turtles are unharmed, and the reef is slowly reviving.

"We had to accept the concept of a sacrificial reef," Hong says. "That means encouraging people to concentrate on one part of the reef, which may not recover but lets other parts come back to life."

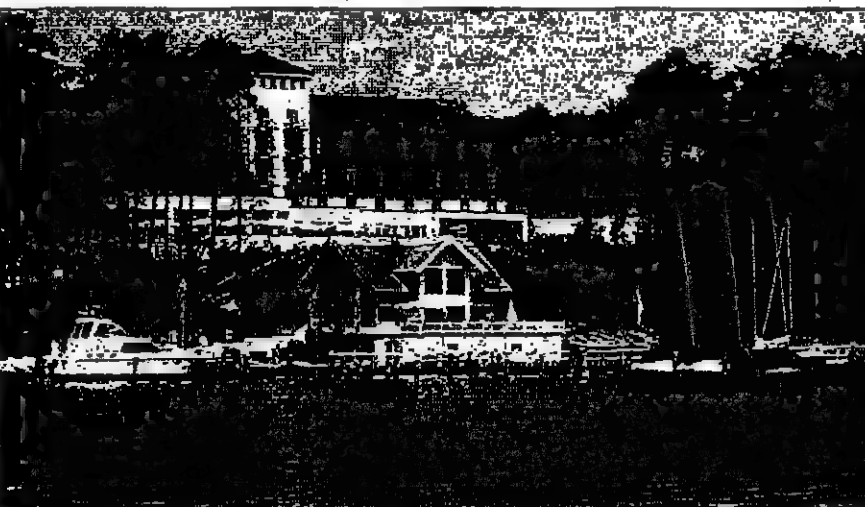
All this raises the problem of what a beach is for. "We have to ask what is appropriate use for a special beach like this," says Hong. "We no longer have cheerleaders being filmed on the sand, for instance."

In the long term, Hong would like to see the three beach concessions – a food shop, a shuttle bus and a snorkel rental store – banished, and the beach limited to 2,000 visitors at one time (still a lot). Political pressures remain – to run more city buses to the bay, for instance. It is, Alan Hong agrees, a tricky balancing act.

John Westbrooke

Spa gives itself the treatment

Peter Whitehead on how a German resort is reclaiming its stolen years



Big-name facilities: the Sporting Club Berlin hotel block stands behind the Axel Schmidt yacht club

The scars have yet to heal but Bad Saarow is on the mend. The small town in eastern Germany was left badly beaten up after a one-sided street scrap with the Soviet Union that had repercussions for 40 years.

Today, it is picking itself up, dusting itself off and working gamely to make up for lost time. Give it a few years and the recovery of its wounded fabric and battered pride should be complete.

The re-emerging lakeside spa resort still looks east, but now for little more than a benign breeze to plump out the sailors' spinners and spice up golfers' tee-shots.

When it looked best in the aftermath of the second world war, Bad Saarow saw Soviet troops heading its way, drawn by its attractive setting at the northern tip of the Scharnitzelsee, a crooked finger of a lake, and its spa, used by smart Berliners as a health retreat since the 1920s.

Soviet military officers took to the place and up went high walls and barbed wire around the spa and lakeside area; the townsfolk were excluded, their property taken over. With the uniforms now gone, it is the biggest bruise of all that is moulding the landscape – hard cash.

Bad Saarow, 70km south-east of Berlin in Brandenburg state, is a small town by any standards, yet it is having to find room for at least 28 construction sites.

Millions of D-Marks are pouring into the lakeside area, where parks, hotels, shops, a cinema and health therapy and beauty emporia are rising. There is even a stream being created to run through the heart of it all.

At every turn there are trees, cranes, mud, dust, giant pieces of concrete, yellow jackets, hoardings, the odours and everywhere the noise of drills, diggers and saws. This is a town reclaiming its stolen years.

"The Russians took all the best plots for themselves," said my local guide, through an interpreter. "The people were not pleased but could not do anything. It was a period of co-existence."

Was the town's 4,000 population now embracing the rebuilding projects with enthusiasm? "The locals are 5 per cent sceptical, 80 to 70 per cent don't mind and the rest love it as a boost for jobs and tourism," said the guide. "The locals see a big future. They could be right. It is well placed to benefit from the imminent installation in Berlin of the German government, and a hoped-for eastwards shift in the balance of power, influence and spending in Germany."

Geographically, it is the equivalent of Annecy, in France, each situated at the

northern end of a sizeable and usable lake.

But while the French version enjoys views across the water towards the Alps, and is typically French, with alleys, restaurants, canals and bridges all in a jumble of colour and energy, Bad Saarow, as far as one can tell, will be typically German. Its ordered streets, structured parks, and strict planning regulations – buildings must be replaced as they were before, with no fences or garages in the lakeside area – are producing an altogether more spacious, cooler effect. What it lacks

in bustle and prettiness, it will make up for in taste and efficiency.

At the heart of it all is a huge new spa building, now taking shape, with glass walls to provide views south across the lake. But the most wonderful building in town will always be the old railway station, built in 1911. Its beautifully aged grey beams would hardly look out of place in Stratford-upon-Avon and, once it is renovated, the station will form the south-eastern end of a direct 40-minute link with Berlin.

As you drive around the

town, the drab buildings from the Communist years stick out like sore thumbs and are being demolished. Nowhere is the contrast in architectural styles more stark than when heading south-east out of town along the lake. On one side of the road stand the dreary blocks built for workers in the military medical academy that grew in Bad Saarow during the cold war years; on the other are tidy lakeside villas, some from the 1920s, some new.

The medical academy, recently accused of having been one of the main bases

for East Germany's programme of drug-taking in athletics, is today called the Humaine clinic, and is one of eastern Brandenburg's largest employers, with almost 1,000 staff.

But the biggest single new project around the lake is the Sporting Club Berlin, which features a Kempinski-run hotel and big-name sporting facilities: the Alwin Schockemöhle equestrian centre, the Nick Bollettieri tennis academy and the Axel Schmidt sailing school and yacht club. There are also three big-name golf courses: the Arnold Palmer (green and tree-lined), the Nick Faldo (a long, barren, bunker-straw links-style course that is to host this year's German Open) and the Bernhard Langer (barely off the drawing board).

The Sporting Club sits on the western shore of the lake, 5km south of Bad Saarow. The buildings along the lakeside – the hotel and apartments – are in the Brandenburg style, with red tiled roofs and cream-yellow walls.

But limits on the width of structures allowed on the waterfront posed a challenge to the designers of the main hotel block. The solution was to place two buildings next to each other and cover the gap between with a glass

roof – a compromise the planners found acceptable.

The hotel has all that you would expect of a newly built five-star hotel (it opened on June 1 1997): it is smart, spacious and spotless, but awaits the scratches, stains and creaking floors that will one day give it its heart and soul.

Evert Schueller, the marketing director who showed me round, found much to point out that was state of the art – the conference facilities, the immaculate tennis courts, the Polly Vital health and beauty centre, the Olympic size indoor riding arena and stables. Even the outdoor bays on the golf driving range are to be heated. And each sporting centre even has its own restaurant – my favourite was the cosy yacht club's.

Eating outside on the main hotel terrace is popular in spring and summer, says hotel manager Rüdiger Hollweg. This comment developed into a conversation about the weather and I learned that it rarely snows in the region, although it sometimes gets cold enough for the lake to freeze over.

And all year round that welcome breeze keeps rolling in from the east.

Peter Whitehead stayed at the Kempinski Hotel Sporting Club Berlin, Parkallee 1, D-15526 Bad Saarow. Tel: (+49) 23631 60 (or toll free for reservations on 0800-965558). He flew with AB Airlines (tel: 0800-458211), which operates twice-daily between Gatwick and Berlin Schönefeld.

Here is a place where there is nothing to do. There are no temples or monuments, no archaeological sites, no museums, no game parks or protected species, no folk dancing, no shops and no disco.

What a relief. All you are required to do in the Maldives is to sit on your verandah, to lie on your beach, to look out on the purest turquoise sea and perhaps to swim in it, to allow various charming locals to bring you food and drink in abundance at any hour you choose, and to consider – and even decline – the offer of scuba diving, snorkelling, sailing, big game fishing, that sort of thing.

As Noel Coward would have said: "Very flat, the Maldives..." They are a sequence of specks of sand in the depths of the Indian Ocean, 1,500 of them, almost on the Equator, and none of them is more than a few feet high. We talk nervously of global warming and the fact that scientists propose that the Maldives will vanish

Specks of luxury in a turquoise sea

J D F Jones is busy doing nothing except contemplating the beauty of the Maldives

under the waves within 30 years – some say less. That seems a pity: hardly as important as the fate of Bangladesh and its millions, but a pity nevertheless.

Only 200 of these "islands", grouped into atolls, are inhabited, and there is a strict division between the rural fishing islands of the local Moslem population and the small number opened to international tourism.

Whether the government can indefinitely (or for the allotted 30 years) maintain the distinction seems doubtful – the capital, Male, is modernising rapidly as the tourist money pours in – but the outer islands are certainly strictly segregated and will continue to be so if only because there is, quite simply, only room for one hotel on each of them.

A typical luxury establish-

ment, such as the Banyan Tree, crams 48 chalets on to an outcrop of *terra firma* only 400 yards in diameter, and even that is being eroded alarmingly, so they have to spend a fortune on sandbags and coral walls to keep the tides at bay.

The Maldives are a fairly recent newcomer to the travel scene, although the momentum is picking up steadily as the government "releases" more islands to the hotel chains, encouraging them to push out to the more distant atolls. Ten new islands have been put out to lease this year.

The islands all enjoy an exquisitely beautiful situation, but the problem was, and remains, their inaccessibility. It is a long flight from Europe or the Far East and most travellers have to go via Dubai or Sri Lanka or Trivandrum in south India. Then there is the final shuttle out to the resorts, by sea-

plane or helicopter, fast launch or the slow, local dhonis. It used to take 10 hours in a dhoni to get from Male to one of the best resorts, Soneva Fushi on

plane or helicopter, fast launch or the slow, local dhonis. It used to take 10 hours in a dhoni to get from Male to one of the best resorts, Soneva Fushi on

Kunfunadhoo Island, where the first hotel was attempted in the early 1980s and, not surprisingly, failed. Today, you get there by seaplane in about half-an-hour.

Soneva Fushi today is an exclusive holiday resort, shamelessly up-market and determined to go even higher as it plans to convert

this year's 63 rooms to a smaller number of self-contained lodges set even more privately than they are today in the dense vegetation which leads to the empty beaches.

It is a place which is popular with celebrities – the locals don't know who they are, and the other guests are too blasé to care. And you certainly do not dress for dinner: bare feet are near-mandatory. You lack for nothing, from a diving school to a helipad, from a massage to your own hi-fi and video system, from direct-dial phones to a bar which stays awake as long as you do. Some rooms suggest that Robinson Crusoe has come to the Savoy, with simple and elegant furniture in bamboo and teak.

Most important of all, the island may be small – one mile by a quarter – but there is no sense of living cheek

by jowl with your fellow guests. Like many of the other resorts, Soneva Fushi is obsessively eco-friendly. The coral is protected, you are expected to return your marine or tuna unharmed to the ocean, and there are hopes of turning the lagoon into a marine park.

Turtles occupy one end of the island, dolphins the other. The Banyan Tree on Vabbinfaru, an easier 20-minute dash by launch from Male, does not have quite the same feeling of exclusiveness, although it is certainly luxurious. Three years old with 48 rooms, it has attractive individual chalets of Indonesian style with conical thatch roofs. It is part of the Asian group which first developed Thailand's Phuket. Again, it has every facility you could imagine, including Jacuzzi, but the big differences with Soneva Fushi are that the island is

smaller (and there is a distinctly lesser sense of privacy) and it does not have air-conditioning. This is an important consideration. The Maldives are very hot.

True, the sea is a few yards away and is wonderfully warm yet at the same time refreshing, but be warned. You will anyway probably avoid the off-season – from now until August. The bonus is that there is no risk of malaria. You will also have guessed that these places do not come cheap, yet they claim a high percentage of return clients.

It must be to do with the extraordinary combination of turquoise shallows, deep blue ocean beyond the reef, blinding white sand, and the certainty that you can hardly hope to get away from it all so completely while yet being cosseted as you never are at home.

J D F Jones's visit was arranged by Western and Oriental Travel Ltd, King House, 11 Westbourne Grove, London W8 4UA. Tel: 0171-221 8677, fax 221 7808. He flew from London to Male via Dubai with Emirates.

John Westbrooke

TRAVEL

Rap and calypso at Trinidad pavement parties

Nicholas Woodsworth is exhausted by shoulder-shimmying, hip-shaking exuberance in Port of Spain

Port of Spain, as locals will proudly tell you, is a 24-hour kind of place. Carnival festivities? Calypso king competitions? The Easter goat and crab races? Such periodic jollity, citizens will snort dismissively, is fine as far as it goes. But it could not possibly contain all the party-time effervescence stored up inside the average Trinidadian. Irrepressible, it is liable to spill on to the pavement at any hour of the night or day, and Port of Spain is ready for it.

Now I am not adverse to the occasional *gambade* myself, although I must admit that after my last tour of Bourbon Street I remain pledged to greater restraint. Indeed, I have not danced the *mazurka* since - at least not on the roof of a 96 Chevy at three in the morning. And if I do so again, you may be sure that this time the Chevy will be stationary. Port of Spain on a Saturday night seemed a reasonable compromise.

Great was my disappointment, then, when I wandered down to Independence Square early one Saturday evening only to find it dead and deserted. On weekdays it is the very heart of the city, a bustling, driving place which, as the scorching sun declines and offices and shops empty, turns into a sort of giant outdoor bar, lounge and social club.

Soca, reggae, and rap boom from speakers trained on the square. The crowds mill, chat,

flirt, buy high-cholesterol fried foods, and pop into corner-shops every now and then to pick up another cold Carib beer to stroll on with. The more dedicated tipplers sit at tables, bagged bottles of rum and mixers conveniently at hand. Bench-loads of young men study young women passing by. Young women make big eyes back. Occasionally a preacher with a megaphone warns the entire world it is going straight to hell, but the world seems not to care.

On this evening, though, it seemed as if everybody finally had gone to hell. Mysteriously, the square was desolate and empty. Shops were shut tight. The tables and benches were abandoned. The music was turned off. I hung around a while, hoping things might pick up. I tried to talk with the square's one other hanger-on, but he did not need me - he was busy talking to himself. I bought copies of *Heat*, *The Bomb*, and *Blas*, Trinidad's weekend papers, but not even they seemed capable of spurring Port of Spain to action.

I had been deceived. I was about to drag myself off to an early night in bed when around the corner, windows down and music thumping, came one of Port of Spain's communal taxis.

I will not try to replicate, apart from the initial "Yeh mon!" of the taxi-driver looking for a fare, the conversation that took place. Suffice it to say the message from



Drumming up business on a Saturday night in Port of Spain

the amused taxi passengers, delivered in rich Caribbean lilt, was clear. I was a turkey.

Did I really think anyone of sound mind would go downtown on a weekend? Didn't I know that downtown was a place for work? Does any sane person work on a Saturday night? If they can avoid it, does any sane person work at all? Of course not. They had instead for the Western Main Road. By the time I had figured out where exactly that was, the taxi had already dropped me there.

When it came to the active pursuit of pleasure, the Independence Square crowd, I realised in a moment, were merely idling in neutral. The throng here was thicker, the music louder, the bars and food stalls more

crowded, the flirting more overt and daring. It is on the Western Main Road that Trinidadians shift into high gear.

"Do not be afraid to ask for credit," I not afraid to say no, read a hand-painted sign tacked up in the One-stop Tea Shop near the corner of Nisam Street. "Since you have been last, things have changed," it went on. "Trust dead. Bad pay kill him."

The moral of the story seemed lost on passers-by. No one looked even vaguely interested in buying tea anyway. What people wanted instead, cash on the barrelhead, was beer, rum and pig-tail soup.

There is nothing, it seems, like starting an evening's carousing in Port of Spain with a steaming soup of pigs' tails. Perhaps. But

at Jo's sidewalk stall, I opted for a slightly less intimidating "bake-and-shark" instead. As large, round, Jo deep-fried doughy bread and flaky shark meat in a pot of bubbling oil, I sat in conversation with customers on the bench beside me.

Jobs and money, family histories, man problems and woman problems... such is the frank and lively nature of Trinidadians that in no time they are exchanging deep confidences with perfect strangers. Who - the One-stop Tea Shop aside - says trust is dead?

All conversation stopped, however, when the Serenaders got going outside a bar two shops away. The Serenaders - two dozen men, women, boys and girls, dressed in a uniform of

black T-shirts and bright white running shoes - are dedicated and accomplished musicians. Their steel drums produce complex rhythms and melodies, a subtle synthesis of the African and the European. Certainly they played their first number, "Over the Rainbow", in a way Judy Garland never dreamed of. It would have limbered up even the Tin Man himself.

I watched a small black boy no older than 10, a storm of controlled syncope, deftly hammer out a lightning calypso with the same polished professionalism as the grey-bearded, dreadlocked old showman beside him. But the Serenaders were not merely practised performers. They were serious party people also, with a capacity to infect

everyone about them with their exuberance. If alcohol was the carburettor that fed the crowd's engine, the steel band's music gave it a means of locomotion and a destination.

In no time a large group of hip-shaking, shoulder-shimmying, bottom-wiggling Port of Spainers had gathered. They overflowed the too-narrow sidewalk and spread out into the street, weaving between cars, waving at bus drivers. Here in a warm, humid night redolent of rum and cat-pee, of fast-fermenting garbage, tropical flowers, slowly-cooling asphalt and the salt smell of the nearby sea, were some very exotic Caribbean creatures indeed.

Tall, bearded Africans in knitted caps of Rastafarian red, yellow and green; smaller, wiry East Indians in rubber congs and T-shirts; a beautiful Chinese girl in a long white silk *cheong sam*; a couple of dirt-grained street crazies in rags and bare feet; a large, black earth-mother in tur-

'At 3am I was in a throbbing, smoky room watching the calypsonian Mighty Sparrow'

ban, handles and flowing robes; a plump mestizo woman in a tight red corset; a sweetly smiling elderly woman with white hair who might have been my grandmother, but for the swing in her step and the rum bottle brandished above her head. All these and a hundred more drifted past in the night, propelled on waves of laughter and music.

It was not just the Serenaders who were providing the action. Up and down the street people were wandering in and out of bars and music places. I wandered in and out, too. Three o'clock in the morning found me in a smoky, throbbing upstairs room watching a calypsonian called the Mighty Sparrow. The Sparrow - one of the island's natural forces; a sort of one-man tropical hurricane - has been getting Trinidadians fired up since the 1950s; and he got me fired up, too.

Port of Spain is indeed a 24-hour kind of place. Carried away by the crowd, by steel bands and calypsonians, by Carib beer and my own enthusiasm, I realised I was just about ready to dance a *mazurka* on a car roof. It was, I determined, time to go home.

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TRAVEL

A holiday in the wild west

Christopher McCooley lifts up his eyes to the Welsh hills – and is impressed

A couple of hours by car from the soft shires of middle England, I was in a pub and being denied one of life's simple pleasures...cavorting on the conversations of other drinkers.

As the only Welsh I know is *istiddod*, it was deeply frustrating. As befits a good drinking establishment, banter and jokes and gossip abounded. I have no doubt, but I understood not a word. I was in Tregaron which enjoys splendid isolation in the remote heart of Wales. It lies on the western flank of the Cambrian mountains and is best approached from England by taking the unclassified road from Benllyn on the A483. This road, through the hamlet of Abergwesyn, must be one of the finest, wildest roads in all the British Isles. It was out of season and late afternoon; after Abergwesyn, not a vehicle did I encounter on the single track road. Just sheep. Lots of them, their ears at ten to three, looking up quizzically, chewing the cud rapidly, as if their lives depended on it.

The road follows narrow valleys and then climbs slopes so steep that second, sometimes even first gear, had to be sought. Then undulations so roller-coasterish that I could not stop myself rising in my seat to check that nothing was coming the other way. At the wind-swept high point, open views to

Snowdonia in the north and the Brecon Beacons to the south and a stunning setting sun, the colour of the Welsh dragon, slipping into the Irish Sea.

The Celts, quarrelsome and confrontational, rode their war chariots over these mountains and drove out the peaceful and pastoral Bronze Age settlers. They brought with them the iron arms and equipment that gave the age its name. In turn came the Romans, reputedly to mine the gold found thereabouts. They established garrison camps (long gone), connected by straight roads (still discernible as the modern roads follow them) and enslaved the natives to work the mines.

Welsh gold is still mined but it is so rare that it commands a premium over imported gold. Rhianon Evans, inspired by her Celtic roots, designs jewellery and sells it in the Welsh Gold Centre in Tregaron. She has created special pieces for special people.

Sally Burton commissioned her to make the medal awarded at the National Eisteddfod in memory of Richard, her husband. Most recently, the wedding rings for William Hague, the leader of the opposition, and his bride, Fiona, were made by Evans.

Tregaron does not have a castle but it does have a church tower that was used in times of trouble to watch for approaching enemies

and as a place of sanctuary if they attacked. The church stands on a hillock and, according to local tradition, it was formed to cover the grave of St Caron, who died in the 3rd century.

In 1282 Edward I gave Tregaron a charter and allowed a market to be established and this helped the town prosper. Sheep and the production of wool were important – to promote the industry it was decreed that people be buried in a

Tregaron was noted for the carousing and drinking of the drovers in the 19th century

woollen shroud. The fine for not doing so was 5s, a swinging sum of money in 1878. By the middle of the 19th century there were three woollen factories in Tregaron, employing 176 knitters and 63 tailors.

For a time there was an Aberystwyth and Tregaron bank which used sheep on its bank notes. The £1 note had one sheep, the £5 note five and the tenner ten. Farmers had enormous respect for the wealth that sheep brought but the

woollen industry went into decline with the arrival of the railway in 1866.

The railway put another group of people out of work – the drovers. The sheep and cattle farmers of the area would employ them to walk their animals in groups of 200 over the Abergwesyn Pass to the markets of England. In 1857 there were six blacksmiths in Tregaron, mostly employed to double-shoe the cattle for the long trek eastwards. As well as beasts, flocks of geese also went.

To protect their webbed feet they were dipped in tar and then dusted with sand to give them a better grip. There were 11 pubs in the town during the first half of the 19th century and Tregaron was noted for the carousing and drinking of the drovers, who, as you would expect, chose mountain tracks that bypassed the toll gates operated by the English.

If not living the life of a wild drover, many other Tregaroners worked in the local lead mines. The headstones in St Caron's graveyard suggested many died young – no doubt from diseases linked to the hard physical labour underground. Tregaron was very much a centre of Methodism in Wales and rules about behaviour on the Sabbath were strict.

In spite of the fire and brimstone denunciations for straying from the straight and narrow, many chil-

dren, especially the first-born, arrived in this world to parents who were not officially joined in holy matrimony. Apparently "coarting in bed" was a common practice. Couples were keen to prove fertility before marriage to ensure there were children for the hard physical work to come and to look after them in their old age.

One local Methodist priest was Ebenezer Richard, who was ordained at the age of 30 in 1811. He pioneered the Sunday School movement locally. The people of Tregaron take great pride in his son, Henry Richard, the town's most famous citizen, hence the bronze statue to him in the town square in front of the Talbot Inn. Henry was known in Westminster as the "MP for Wales" because of his radicalism and pride in his Welsh language and heritage. But his stage was not just a Welsh one. He travelled the world as the secretary of the Peace Society which believed in peace through negotiations and it was he who laid the foundation for the League of Nations. Karl Annan would be proud of him too.

■ The Wales Tourist Board tel: 01222-699009 fax: 485031

■ Mrs Eleri Davies, Penre Farm, Llanfair Clynog, Lampeter, SA48 5LE. Tel/fax: 01570-433313. Bed and breakfast £19 per person, £10 evening meal.



Peace-maker Henry Richard, Tregaron's most famous son. Wales News

Whatever happened to all those small, family-run French hotels with great food and a penchant for wallpapering the doors?

The answer, I suspect, is that many are still to be found in this year's *Logis de France Guide* available from the French Travel Centre, 178 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AL (£12.90 by post). Last month I stayed at Les Hauts de Montreuil logis, in Montreuil sur Mer, in the Pas de Calais, but it was not an unqualified success.

No wallpaper on the doors, nice bedrooms, small but pleasant bathrooms and a splendidly hospitable welcome had raised expectations. Good first courses and an excellent cheeseboard, but disappointing main courses and a dining room full of English guests, not a French accent to be heard,

put a bit of a damper on the evening.

By way of consolation the buffet breakfast was extremely generous and varied. And I did come away with some excellent food buys from the splendid celler (the building dates from 1637) of M. Gantiez, the proprietor. Gantiez, an affluence of some standing, is a great enthusiast for local, artisanal foods, and will talk you through the region's products at the drop of a spoon. His cellar also has a venerable collection of 18th century brandies, aged Calvados and a magnificent stock of Petrus. Montreuil, of course, as Gantiez

was quick to remind me, was where Victor Hugo set the first volume of *Les Misérables*. This summer the townspeople will don the clothes of their ancestors – I hope they've been washed – and take to the streets in a son of Lumière presentation that mixes local family stories with Hugo's fiction. Performances in the old walled town on July 24-26 and August 1-2.

□ For more son of Lumière details contact Martine Liger on +321 06 04 27.
□ Les Hauts de Montreuil, 21-23 rue Pierre Leduc, tel +321 06 81 95 92. Rooms FF400 to FF500.

Getaway / France

Les Misérables are coming home

Meals FF100 to FF245. Half board available.

Gypsy pilgrimage

Monday and Tuesday sees one of the highlights of the Roman calendar when gypsies from all over Europe flock to Saintes-Marie-de-la-Mer in Provence for a pilgrimage in honour of their patron saint, Samé. Her statue is carried in the robes and jewels and carried to the shore. Holidaymakers and locals join the procession to watch the region's bishop bless the sea, land and people from a fishing

boat. For more details tel +490 87 82 55.

Ferry bargains

Travellers to France may well assume that to enjoy cut-price travel with Brittany Ferries' Travel & Property Owners Club you need to own an overseas property. Well you don't. For an annual membership subscription (from £30) and a one-off registration fee you can get up to 33 per cent off fares to France and Spain; up to 33 per cent off accommodation on Spanish routes; 10 per cent off

meals and wine; and a free breakfast on overnight sailings with a cabin.

Regular newsletters and a dedicated booking and information service keep you in touch with the latest bargains. For more information call 0990-143555.

Quick Channel trips

Hoverspeed – 35 minutes from Dover to Calais – is offering short breaks to France including: a £150 overnight for two in a traditional French chateau; a £164 trip for a night for four in Le Touquet; a £200 overnight stay and one-day

peas to Disneyland Paris for two adults and two children under 12; and a £116 one-night stay for two in Paris. Bed and breakfast and the price of the Channel crossing with your own car is included. You also get a £5 duty-free voucher redeemable against purchases of £30 or more. For more details and bookings call 0990 240241.

Autoroute opens

The newest stretch of autoroute in northern France opened last week. Berck, Le Touquet and Hardelot are now all linked directly to the new section of the M16 from Boulogne to Abbeville. It also means that you can get from the Pas de Calais to Paris in two hours. The toll from Boulogne to Paris is FF90.

Jill James

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SPORT

Tennis

It's all down to weather and balls

John Barrett explains how conditions and equipment are likely to decide the winner in France

According to the computer, the 28-year-old American Pete Sampras and the 17-year-old Swiss Miss, Martina Hingis, will emerge as the new champions when the French Open ends its two-week run on June 7.

Yet a poll among the players would leave Sampras in fifth or sixth place and Hingis no more than equal favourite with two of her teenage contemporaries, Venus Williams of the US and the glamorous Russian, Anna Kournikova - both of whom have achieved recent victories over the world No.1.

When play begins on Monday all eyes will be on the weather forecast. If the conditions are as dry and hot as they were last year then the fast-court men such as Sampras, Australia's Pat Rafter (who was a semi-finalist in 1997), and former Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands will have a chance. That is because the French adopted a smaller, faster ball two years ago in the belief that excessively long rallies were turning off the spectators.

Yet it used to be so much worse. I remember the anguished look on the face of Philippe Chatrier, president of the French Tennis Federation, after we had all endured the excruciatingly boring 1975 final between Bjorn Borg and Guillermo Vilas in which there was a rally of 93 strokes in the first game.

In those days the weapons were made of wood, Borg's a meaty Donny weighing 16oz. Today's graphite frames, stiffer, more powerful and with a larger "sweet spot", weigh in at 11oz-13oz and move so much more easily through the air. Everyone hits the ball harder from the baseline than players of Borg's era, and many serve better.

Yet the French were still suffi-

ciently worried to change the ball specification. After last year's singles finals when the unheralded Croatian Iva Majoli out-hit a thring Hingis and the sunny Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten blasted former champion Sergi Bruguera from the court with outrageous forehand and backhand winners, the French must have wondered if they had gone too far.

Sampras is fully aware that his chances of putting the missing Grand Slam trophy on his mantelpiece alongside his four Wimbledon, four US Opens and two Australian, have never been better - provided it remains warm and dry. "Clay court tennis is pretty much weather and balls," he said last week in Rome where, until

playing poorly against Michael Chang in the quarter-finals, he had looked impressive. "If it's cold in Paris it's very slow. If the weather's hot it's pretty fast. The year I did my best at the French [1996 semi-finals] it was really warm. This is the biggest challenge of my career at this point and I'm looking forward to it."

He may not enjoy slugging it out against the whirling top-spin of the established clay-courtiers such as Spaniards Alberto Berasategui, Carlos Moya, Felix Mantilla and Albert Costa, or Fabrice Santoro of France. Despite possessing one of the best serves in the game, I believe Sampras will fall in Paris unless he applies constant pressure with serve-and-volley tactics. He must also use the backhand slice as the

basic tool from the baseline. Too many of his top-spin backhands fall in mid-court or result in error.

The logical men's favourite is the Chilean left-hander, Marcelo Rios, whose Italian title last week brought his 1998 tournament tally to four - three of them Mercedes Super 9 titles. Only four players have achieved that feat before - Stefan Edberg in 1990, Sampras in 1994, plus Andre Agassi and Thomas Muster in 1995. No one has yet won four Super 9s in a calendar year.

Watching Rios standing on the baseline and beating Agassi at his own game in the Lipton final last March was a fascinating experience. Some of his counter-hitting drives, fired at incredible pace, some at audacious angles,

took the breath away. The intraculous thing was that he made so few errors. Rios served well too. Those have been the telling factors since. Despite an enforced lay-off with an injured elbow Rios is back in the form that briefly earned him the No.1 ranking. He is the man to beat.

My hunch is that Petr Korda will do well. The 30-year-old Czech left-hander can perform on any surface and was a Paris finalist six years ago. His Australian win last January has taken off all the pressure. Korda no longer feels he has to prove something. He can let his considerable artistry take over - and that will be worth watching.

The remarkable Williams sisters will create many of the stories among the women. Venus,

18 in June, is 15 months older than Serena, who has played her sister three times without success. However, the sibling rivalry is intensifying.

Venus reminds me so much of Althea Gibson, the first great black player who won back-to-back Wimbledon and US titles in 1957 and 1958. Tall, athletic and with more than a touch of arrogance, Venus could become the next world No.1. She has irritated Hingis by publicly announcing that she will overtake her before the end of the year. What at first seemed an idle boast now looks achievable for someone whose ranking has already climbed from 22 last December to its present No.8.

Perhaps, though, Kournikova will overtake them all. She never misses a trick. Nor do her agents. They will be fully aware that her 17th birthday falls on the last day of these championships. If, the previous day, she has won her first Grand Slam crown (and she very well might) the IMG publicity machine will swing into action with a suitable celebration.

Sporting Profile

Hakkinen in pole position to succeed

John Griffiths traces skills that have put the Finn in sight of the Formula One title

It is little known internationally, yet it is Britain's fastest circuit. It snakes through a grassy expanse of northern Hampshire, its deceptive, flat-out kink one of the most daunting corners in motor racing. Aply named Church, it is a place where many a driver has a brief word with the Almighty.

It was at Thruxton, almost a decade ago, that I first saw Mika Hakkinen. He was 19, driving a Formula Three single-seater and fighting wheel to wheel through Church at 150mph with fellow-Finn Mika Salo. Had Hakkinen left his braking any later for the chicane, you could imagine him carving a new road clear to the English Channel.

Instead, he carried more speed through the chicane than the laws of physics would seem to allow, on his way to that year's F3 championship. Here, patently, was a world champion in the making.

That only now, as he nears his 30th birthday, is Hakkinen daring to think the Formula One world title might be within his own grasp and that of his West McLaren-Mercedes underlines the huge obstacles on the climb to motor sport's summit.

Talent, as the late great Ayrton Senna observed, is not enough. Senna learned early that the limits of achievement in F1 were defined more by the quality of equipment available than by raw driving ability. In a world where mega-rich drivers will spend millions to buy an F1 drive, success for the less affluent like Hakkinen depends also on political skills - to be in the right place at the right time when team managers are making their decisions.

Had he possessed the urbane manner and

wheeler-dealer skills of Senna, Hakkinen might have been within reach of the title in closer to the five years it took Senna to go from bottom to top.

He does not - although colleagues say he is as quietly canny as any Scot like team-mate David Coulthard - and thus has relied more on track skills than others take notice. But the career moves have been well crafted, nonetheless. Hakkinen stepped straight from F3 into Team Lotus in 1991 before top-six placings led McLaren team boss Ron Dennis to grab him initially

as a test driver, for 1993.

The Finn-born, Helsinki-born Finn has been with McLaren since. He finished fourth in the 1994 F1 championship, seventh in 1995 and fifth in 1996 as McLaren's supremacy passed to Williams and Benetton. Last year he finished sixth again.

With three wins in the first five races this season, Hakkinen is points clear of Coulthard. Though one of these wins was controversial - Coulthard letting him through to victory under a pre-race agreement - Hakkinen regards it as no reflection on his driving ability. But for a botched pit stop, Hakkinen almost certainly would have won. In the last round, at

Barcelona, Coulthard admits Hakkinen waltzed away to the flag - "there was nothing I could do".

Given his own form and the superiority of the McLaren, the Finn is firm favourite to wrest the title from Jacques Villeneuve and Williams.

Often dour and diffident on television, Hakkinen cuts an altogether friendlier and more vibrant figure away from the cameras.

Does he feel he may at last be on the brink of a world championship? "I think automatically, yes; I do feel that way, and that I am heading towards my dream. But we are only five races into the season, and so it is much too early to start dreaming too much. The other teams and drivers will always improve and it is important to maintain the focus of my mind in developing the car."

In the eyes of the world's media one shadow hangs over all F1 driver achievements, including Hakkinen's. It is cast by Michael Schumacher.

Will Hakkinen himself, if Schumacher is betrayed by his Ferrari, be judged as just the lucky possessor of the best chassis/engine combination?

"It is very difficult to compare my performance with Michael's," says Hakkinen. "What Michael has done in the past is fantastic... he is twice world champion already and has proved he is top-class. In difficult conditions, such as Spa and Jerez, he has shown himself quicker than anyone. But this year is not the case - it is we who have been dominating..."

Hakkinen admits to periods of frustration - but none of self-doubt. "There have been times when I have been really struggling to get results. But I have never been in the situation

where I thought I was not good enough, and that I should be doing something else."

When he gets into the McLaren for qualifying today for the Monaco Grand Prix it will be with a mix of paranoia and elation, petrified that something will go wrong; elation at the title maybe coming one step closer.

His reluctance to talk about whether the championship is within reach is understandable. But there is no doubting his sense that luring chief

designer Adrian Newey away from Williams, and the backing of the mighty Mercedes-Benz, has put McLaren on a roll. "But you can never discount teams and drivers closing the gap. The most important thing in F1 is always to keep developing the car to suit yourself."

If the title becomes his this year, could F1 quickly loosen its grip on Hakkinen? After nearly 15 years of racing he could hardly be blamed if it did. A savage crash at Adelaide in 1984 left him clinging to life with a

fractured skull. Recently, he has become engaged to Franze, seven years his senior and a world away from the pit-lane limbo.

"But when I won at Barcelona last year, for the first time in F1, I was over the moon. I was just... Hakkinen can't say any more as he savours that victory."

The Adelaide memories persist, but do not haunt his every move. "The accident has definitely made me stronger in my concentration and I am not so inclined to rush into

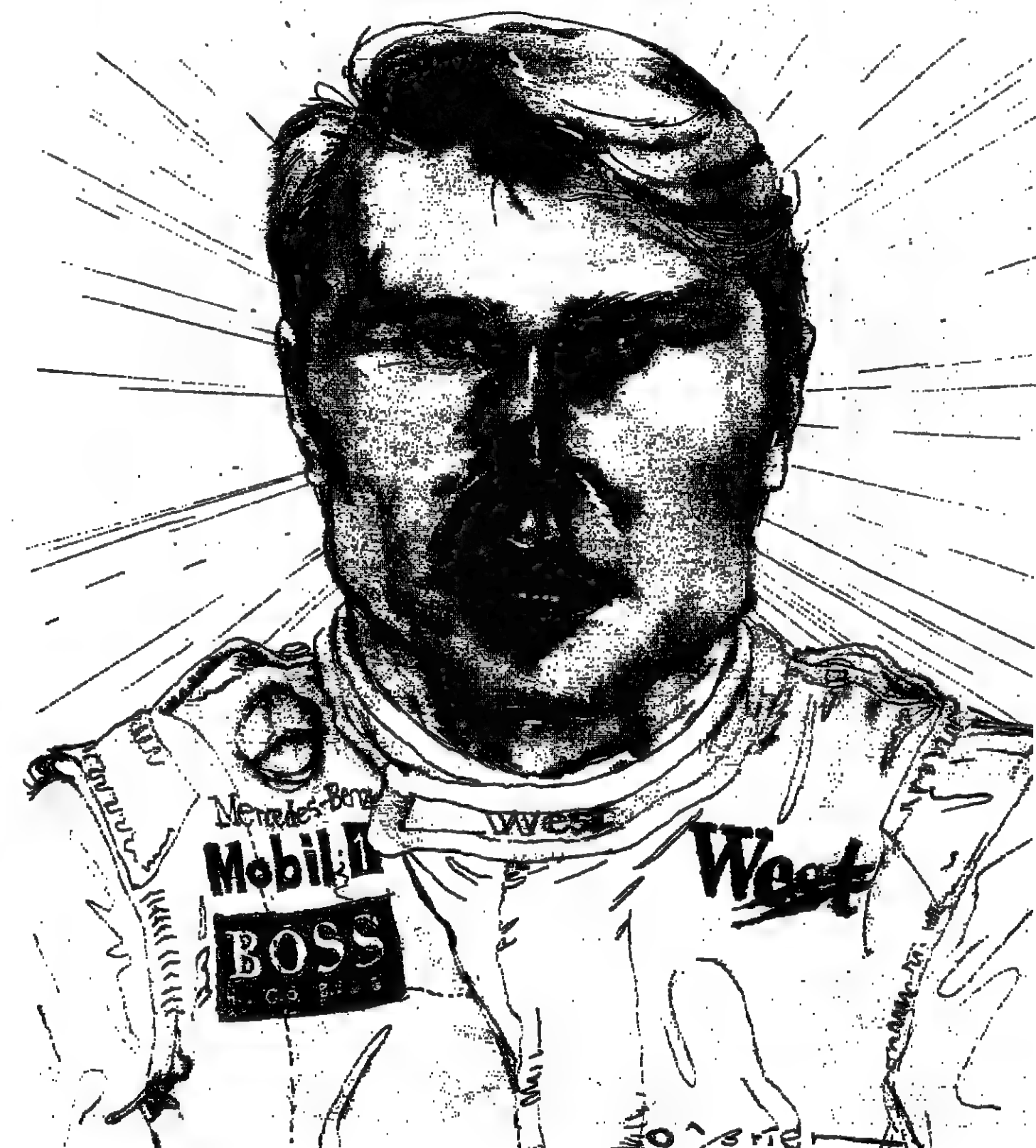
decisions. But there is no fear, not at all. There is never a feeling in my mind or body that, oh no, I have to go back on that dangerous track."

"If I felt any other way, that I should win the championship, take my money and do something else - then I might as well stop now. But you get a taste of success and you want it to continue. Will I still be doing it at 40? Maybe I will; maybe I will love racing more than ever." F1 has already earned him undisclosed millions -

home, like half the grand prix elite, is tax-friendly Monaco - and he admits to occasional thought about the eventual business uses to which they will be put. But what they might be he is not saying.

He will not be short of advice - like most other F1 drivers he has a coterie of financial and personal advisers. "To be sure, I don't think about keeping all the money under my pillow."

A pause: the grin grows wider. "And I'm pretty sure that it's not under anyone else's pillow, either."



Sailing

Human factor at helm still counts

As the Whitbread Race draws to a close, Keith Wheatley hails talent rather than technology

overall winner. Yet it took considerable discipline to race 3,500 miles ignoring seven other yachts.

"This was a hard leg for us because we had to have a special position. We had to stay close to Swedish Match," said Cayard after coming ashore. "It is a little unexciting... but it was the thing to do."

According to watch-leader Magnus Olsson, Cayard would come on deck telling the crew to slow down and stop trying to be first to France. Motivating hard-driving professional sailors to proceed carefully enough to be sure of sixth place (Swedish Match lay seventh) is the kind of thing Cayard excels at.

Looking back at a race no one expected him, as a first-time

Whitbread competitor, to win, the San Francisco-based helmsman identified several critical phases. The first was winning the start out of the Solent last September.

"We didn't do too well in the Fastnet time-up race. We didn't use the key sails well in that race, we were a little unsettled. To go on and win the first leg was huge."

The next leg, from Cape Town to Western Australia, was almost a disaster. Cayard and his crew pushed the boat and themselves too hard in the Southern Ocean. Large amounts of gear broke, crew were on the edge of physical breakdown, and the yacht virtually drifted for 24 hours while rivals sailed past.

"The second most important

thing," said Cayard, "was having the guts to look at ourselves hard in the mirror when we got to Fremantle." Why did things go wrong?

"We had a really hard meeting that morning and it wasn't very pleasant but you have to be able to look in the mirror honestly. We did that and won leg five. What we have done since then is diligent homework."

Another individual who made a significant difference to the performance of one of the boats was Isabelle Autissier. The French solo sailor joined the all-female crew of EF Education (sister yacht to Cayard's) for the leg from Baltimore to her home port of La Rochelle.

After trailing last or next-to-last on almost every previous leg, Education's fourth place was a huge boost for its crew.

As racing sailor and author Mark Chissell observed: "What was different was that the strengthening of EF Education's afterguard with the additional input of Isabelle Autissier meant they were making tactical calls that were the equal of any of the other boats." Chissell is writing a book on EF's two-boat campaign.

"The additional analysis of the weather situation and the tactical options, allowed the afterguard to be proactive rather than just trying to hang on to the rest of the fleet."

Education's French skipper Christine Guillon said Autissier

was good at all aspects of sailing. Her enormous experience was something "you can't learn in books". Her weather knowledge had been particularly valuable.

"She understands all the meteorological forecasting is good at clouds," said Guillon.

The team surprised many of their long-time critics, among them Merit Cup skipper Grant Dalton. He had declared that if "the girls" ever beat him, he would stab himself with his navigation dividers, a threat he was compelled to modify when his boat came in fifth.

For Lawrence Smith, the British skipper of Silk Cut, this Whitbread has been something of a watershed. Nothing seemed to go right in the early legs, culminating in a disastrous between New

Zealand and Chile that effectively ended the boat's chances. A win on leg six and a second place into La Rochelle have only partly eased the pain.

The press has been harsh, a new experience for Smith, long lauded as the golden boy of British yachting. His policy of hiring young, relatively untried sailors to form the majority of his crew did not deliver the goods. He had to coax men like veteran navigator Vincent Genoa out of semi-retirement in order to deliver some results.

A win or podium finish on the 400-mile dash from La Rochelle to Southampton could still see Silk Cut finish around fourth overall, but that would be a far cry from the expectations surrounding the purple yacht when it left the Solent as the bookie's favourite.

The irony that Smith was EF Language's first skipper (until bought out in a transfer deal by the cigarette sponsor), and developed most of the winner's outstanding sail programme, will not be lost on the British yachtsman.

INTERNATIONAL ARTS GUIDE

What's on around the world

AMSTERDAM

EXHIBITION

Rijksmuseum
Tel: 31-20-673 2121
Drawings from the Golden Age: display of 100 17th century Dutch drawings, including works by Visscher, Van der Velde and Van Goyen; to Jul 12

BARCELONA

EXHIBITIONS

Fundació Joan Miró
Tel: 34-9-329 1908
www.fundacionmirona.es
Private negatives, public fictions: 100 photographs from the collection of the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris. Includes works by Robert Doisneau, Dora Maar and Man Ray; to Jul 12

Museu Picasso

Tel: 34-9-319 6310
Egon Schiele: The Leopold Collection. 152 paintings and drawings on loan from the largest private collection of Schiele's work in the world; to May 31

BASEL

EXHIBITION

Kunstmuseum
Tel: 41-61-271 0828
www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch
Andy Warhol: Drawings 1942-1987. Around 230 works by the American pop artist, most of them on loan from the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh and the Wertheim Foundation in New York; to Jul 19

BERLIN

CONCERTS

Philharmonie
Tel: 49-30-2549 6354
● Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra: conducted by Bernard Haitink in works by Bartók and Brahms. With soloist Andras Schiff; May 23, 24, 25
● Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra: conducted by Bernard Haitink in works by Schubert and Shostakovich. With soloist Matthias Goerne; May 29

CHICAGO

CONCERTS

Orchestra Hall
Tel: 1-312-294-3000
www.chicagosymphony.org
● Chicago Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Daniel Barenboim in Beethoven's Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4; May 23
● Chicago Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Daniel Barenboim in a concert performance of Fidelio. With the Chicago Symphony Chorus; May 25, 26
● Chicago Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Daniel Barenboim in Beethoven's Symphonies Nos. 6 and 7; May 29

EXHIBITION

Art Institute of Chicago
Tel: 1-312-443 3900
www.artic.edu
Songs on Stone: James McNeill Whistler and the Art of Lithography. Around 200 works by the American expatriate, including drawings, etchings and paintings, which demonstrate the importance of lithography to his art and theory; to Aug 30, then transferring to Ottawa

CLEVELAND

EXHIBITION

Cleveland Museum of Art
Tel: 1-216-421 7340
www.clevelandmuseumofart.org
Gifts of the Nile: Ancient Egyptian Faience. Display of ceramics, known as faience, a mixture worked by the Egyptians and regarded by them as magical. Brings together over 200 works, including statues of kings, gods, and animals, and inlaid boxes ranging over 3000 years. Includes works borrowed from public and private collections in the US and Europe; to Jul 5

FLORENCE

OPERA

Maggio Musicale Fiorentino
Tel: 39-55-211158
www.maggiomusicalefiorentino.com
● Le Comte Ory: by Rossini. New production conducted by Roberto Abbado in a staging by Lorenzo Mariani; ETI-Teatro della Pergola; May 23, 27, 28
● Wozzeck: by Berg. New production by William Friedkin, conducted by Zubin Mehta; Teatro Comunale; May 28, 29

GLASGOW

OPERA

Scottish Opera, Theatre Royal
Tel: 44-141-332 9000
The Queen of Spades: by Tchaikovsky. Conducted by Richard Armstrong in a staging by Yannis Kokkos; May 28

GLYNDEBOURNE

OPERA

Glyndebourne Festival Opera
Tel: 44-1273-815 000
● Così fan tutte: by Mozart. New production by Graham Vick, conducted by Andrew Davis. Cast includes Alan Ogle and Barbara Pittoll. With the London Philharmonic Orchestra; May 24
● Katya Kabanova: by Janáček. Revival of Nikolaus Lehnhoff's production, conducted by Yakov Kreizberg, with designs by Tobias Hoheisel. Cast includes Amanda Roocroft. With the London Philharmonic Orchestra; May 23, 26, 29

HELSINKI

OPERA

Finnish National Opera
Tel: 358-9-4030 2211
● Siegfried: by Wagner. Conductor Leif Segerstam, director Götz Friedrich and designer Gottfried Pilz continue their collaboration on the Ring with this new



'Boy with gun, girl with doll, mother with child', West Transvaal, 1982, by Roger Ballen, in an exhibition of his work at Rotterdam's Karntel

production. The title role is sung by Stig Andersen; May 29
● The Magic Flute: by Mozart. New production by Swedish director Elinor Glaser, designed by Peter Tillberg; May 23, 25, 28

LAUSANNE

EXHIBITION

Fondation de l'Hermitage
Tel: 41-21-320-5001
Pointillisme: more than 100 works, including loans from Europe and the US, tracing the influence of Seurat on a generation of young painters at the turn of the century; to Jun 1

LONDON

CONCERTS

Royal Festival Hall
Tel: 44-171-560 4242
● The Royal Opera: Die ägyptische Helena, by Strauss. Concert performance, conducted by Christian Thielemann. Cast includes Deborah Voigt and Thomas Moser; May 25
● Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra: conducted by Riccardo Muti in works by Brahms and Stravinsky; May 28

EXHIBITIONS

Hayward Gallery
Tel: 44-171-261 0127
www.hayward-gallery.org.uk
Anish Kapoor: one of a generation of British artists who came to prominence in the 1980s, Kapoor creates sculptures using stone, steel, and mirrored metal. This is the first major showing of his work in a public gallery in Britain, and includes massive new stone pieces; to Jun 14

National Gallery

Tel: 44-171-639 3321
● Henry Moore and the National Gallery: this celebration of the centenary of Moore's birth consists in a selection of his favourite among the Gallery's holdings; to May 31
● Masters of Light: Dutch Painting from Utrecht in the Golden Age. Brings together 74 works produced by painters working in the city of Utrecht in the first half of the 17th century; to Aug 2

Royal Academy of Arts

Tel: 44-171-300 8000
Holy Russia: Icons and the Rise of Moscow 1400-1800. 60 rarely exhibited icons lent by Russian museums are the centrepiece of this exhibition, which also includes 16 manuscripts; to Jun 14

Tate Gallery

Tel: 44-171-887 8000
● Per Kirkeby (b.1938): continuing the series of contemporary sculpture displays, this exhibition includes paintings, sculptures and a specially constructed brick structure by the Danish artist; to May 28
● Turner and the Scientists: An Artist in Two Cultures. Display demonstrating the importance of Turner's relationship with his scientific contemporaries, and the impact on his work of new technologies; to Jun 21

Victoria and Albert Museum

Tel: 44-171-938 8500
The Power of the Poster: including classic images from the 1890s and 1900s as well as the work of contemporary designers and agencies; to Jul 26

THEATRE

Almeida Theatre
Tel: 44-171-359 4404
The Iceman Cometh: by Eugene O'Neill. Howard Davies' production stars Kevin Spacey, Rupert Graves and Clarke Peters; ends tonight

Barbican Theatre

Tel: 44-171-638 8897
Measure for Measure: by William Shakespeare. Directed by Stéphane Braunschweig. In a staging seen at the Edinburgh Festival last year

Comedy Theatre

Tel: 44-171-569 1731

The Real Inspector Hound by Tom Stoppard and Black Comedy by Peter Shaffer. Double bill directed by Greg Dolan

Lyric Theatre

Tel: 44-171-494 5045
Closer: written and directed by Patrick Marber. West End transfer after a sell-out run at the National Theatre

National Theatre, Cottesloe

Tel: 44-171-452 3000
Copenhagen: Michael Frayn's first original play for the National is about the meeting in 1941 of German physicist Werner Heisenberg and his Danish counterpart Niels Bohr. Directed by Michael Blamires

National Theatre, Lyttelton

Tel: 44-171-452 3000
Othello: by Shakespeare. Sam Mendes directs David Harwood, Simon Russell Beale and Claire Skinner in a production first seen at the Cottesloe

National Theatre, Olivier

Tel: 44-171-452 3000
● An Enemy of the People: by Ibsen. Directed by Trevor Nunn and starring Ian McKellen
● Flight: by Mikhail Bulgakov. Howard Davies directs a production starring Kenneth Cranham and Alan Howard

Playhouse Theatre

Tel: 44-171-539 4401
Naked: by Pirandello. Almeida Theatre production directed by Jonathan Kent. With Juliette Binoche

MUNICH

CONCERTS

Philharmonie Gasteig
Tel: 49-89-5481 2181
● Bavarian Youth Orchestra: conducted by Reinhard Steinberg in works by Brahms and Beethoven. With piano soloist Paul Rivkinis; May 27
● Ivo Pogorelich: recital by the pianist of works by Rachmaninov, Granados, Prokofiev and Chopin; May 25
● London Classical Players: conducted by Roger Norrington in works by Haydn and Mozart. With violin soloist Thomas Zehetmair and viola Ruth Kilian; May 28

NEW YORK

CONCERTS

Lincoln Center
Tel: 1-212-721 6500
www.lincolncenter.org
● New York Philharmonic: conducted by Kurt Masur in Shostakovich's Symphony No. 7, "Leningrad"; Avery Fisher Hall; May 23
● New York Philharmonic: world premiere of Del Tredici's The Spider and the Fly, for Vocalists and Orchestra, conducted by Kurt Masur. The programme is completed by works by Copland, Vivaldi, Weber and Ravel; May 25

EXHIBITIONS

Guggenheim Museum
Tel: 1-212-423 3500
www.guggenheim.org
● China - 5,000 Years: comprising more than 500 works of art, ranging from the Neolithic period to the modern, with traditional works displayed at the uptown museum (to Jun 3), and the modern section at the Guggenheim Museum SoHo (to May 25). Uptown highlights include Neolithic jades, Shang and Zhou bronzes, tomb ceramics, and a collection of Buddhist stone sculptures. The aim of the display at the SoHo museum is to explore the meaning of modernity in China. Both parts will transfer to Bilbao in July

● Visions of Paris: Robert Delaunay's Series. Previously seen in Berlin, this exhibition focuses on the series paintings made by the artist in Paris, of subjects including Saint-Séverin and the Eiffel Tower; to May 24

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Tel: 1-212-979 5500
www.metmuseum.org

Augustin Pajou, Royal Sculptor: retrospective devoted to works by the French sculptor (1730-1806), successful in the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture and a favourite of Louis XV and Louis XVI. Includes marble statues, portrait busts, terracotta sketch-models, and drawings including designs for the opera at Versailles; to May 24

● Pierre-Paul Prud'hon (1758-1823): first American retrospective of work by the court painter and draftsman, who won acclaim during the years spanning the French Revolution, the Empire and the Restoration. Includes 60 paintings and 100 works on paper; to Jun 7

Museum of Modern Art

Tel: 1-212-708 9480
www.moma.org
● Chuck Close: retrospective of the American painter, comprising 90 works and ranging across his career; to May 25
● Fernand Léger (1881-1955): retrospective comprising some 220 paintings and drawings by the early modernist; to May 27, then transferring to the Léger Museum in Biot

Pierpont Morgan Library

Tel: 1-212-695 0008
a.k.a. Lewis Carroll: display of memorabilia marking the centenary of the death of Charles L. Dodgson (1832-1898), mathematician, photographer, and author of Alice in Wonderland; to Aug 30

THEATRE

Brooklyn Academy of Music
Tel: 1-212-239 6200
The Jewes Kisse: by David Hare. Richard Eyre directs Liam Neeson as Oscar Wilde in this Almeida Theatre production premiered in London

Brooklyn Academy of Music

Tel: 1-212-239 6200
The Royal Shakespeare Company presents a two-week season featuring five productions. Matthew Warchus's production of Hamlet opens tonight, with Alex Jennings in the title role. Krupp's Last Tape, by Samuel Beckett, opens next week, as does Shakespeare's Henry VIII. Everyman and Cymbeline follow the week after

Cort Theatre

Tel: 1-212-239 6200
Frank John Hughes's autobiographical one-man show about growing up in New York, directed by David Bar Katz

Golden Theatre

Tel: 1-212-239 6200
The Chairs: by Ionesco. Théâtre de Complicité/Royal Court production transferring from London after a sell-out run. Simon McBurney directs Geraldine McEwan and Richard Briers

Joseph Papp Public Theatre

Tel: 1-212-360 2400
The Cripple of Inishmaan: by Martin McDonagh. Directed by Jerry Zaks

Kit Kat Klub

Tel: 1-212-229 6200
Cabaret: revival of the 1966 Kander and Ebb musical directed by Sam Mendes and Rob Marshall. In a Roundabout Theatre production starring Natasha Richardson

Longacre Theatre

Tel: 1-212-239 6200
Golden Child: David Henry Hwang's 1986 drama explores the impact of Christianity upon a Chinese family. Directed by James Lapine

New York Theatre Workshop

Tel: 1-212-460 5475
Bolt: one-man show, performed by Will Bond and based on the various writings and sayings of director Robert Wilson

Theatre Four

Tel: 1-212-239 6200
The Seagull: by Chekhov. New production by the Blue Light Theatre Company, in a translation by Tom

Stoppard. Cast includes Maria Tucci

Walter Kerr Theatre

Tel: 1-212-339 6200
The Beauty Queen of Leenane: by Martin McDonagh. With Anna Mahan and Marie Mullin

OSAKA

EXHIBITION

The Museum of Art, Kitaleu
Tel: 81-6-624 1111
Aubrey Beardsley: touring exhibition of more than 200 drawings, prints, posters and books, created during the brief period of the artist's fame; to Jun 8

PARIS

CONCERTS

Théâtre des Champs Elysées
Tel: 33-1-4952 5060
● Natalie Dessay: recital by the soprano, with the Orchestre de Paris conducted by Jun Märkl. Programme includes works by Ravel, Granados, Debussy, Rachmaninov and Glazunov; May 27
● Orchestre National de France: conducted by Yuri Temirkanov in works by Rimski-Korsakov, Rachmaninov and Elgar. With piano soloist Yefim Bronfman; May 28
● Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra: conducted by Seiji Ozawa in works by Brahms and Stravinsky; May 28

EXHIBITIONS

Centre Georges Pompidou
Tel: 33-1-4778 1275
www.cncp-gp.fr
Max Ernst: Sculptures, maisons et paysages. Around 100 sculptures and paintings by the German-born artist (1891-1976), who lived and worked in Paris and the US. Associated with Dada and the Surrealists, Ernst broke away from them to develop his own style. The exhibition will travel to Düsseldorf in the autumn; to Aug 17

Grand Palais

Tel: 33-1-4413 1730
Man Ray: major exhibition of works by the photographer, drawing out the contrasts between the styles and techniques with which he worked. Includes landscape photography and portraits; from May 28 to Jun 29

Jeu de Paume

Tel: 33-1-4703 1250
In defiance of painting: "Je ne peins pas, je joue mes tableaux", wrote Kurt Schwitters. This century has seen many artists forsake their brushes in favour of a variety of other implements. Burnt, Fontana and Arman are some of the artists represented in this exhibition, which proposes to explore this dimension of painting; to Aug 30

Musée Carnavalet

Tel: 33-1-4272 2112
Chaumet: showcase of jewels and objets d'art made by the Parisian jewellers from the age of Napoleon to the present; to Jun 28

THEATRE

Le Funambule
Tel: 33-1-4222 8883
Monsieur Chasse: by Feydeau; to Jul 20

Théâtre des Variétés

Tel: 33-1-4233 1141
Le Mari, La Femme et L'Amant: by Guirys. Starring Pierre Arditi and Bernard Murat, who also directs

PRAGUE

CONCERTS

Dvorak Hall
Midor: recital by the violinist of works by Beethoven, Brahms, Szymanowski and Saint-Saëns. With pianist Robert McDonald; May 26

Smetana Hall

Kathleen Battle: recital by the soprano of works by Handel, Wolf, Faure, Rossini and Turina. Accompanied by pianist

Roger Vignoles; May 28

ROME

EXHIBITION

Palazzo delle Esposizioni
Tel: 39-6-474 6903
Lucio Fontana: retrospective of the Italian artist best known for the series of "Spatial Concepts", produced in the 1950s and 1960s; to Jun 22

ROTTERDAM

EXHIBITIONS

Kunsthal
Tel: 31-10-440 0300
● Look at me: Fashion and Photography in Britain 1860 to the present. First stop for a touring exhibition which tracks the development of fashion photography with its emphasis firmly on popular culture rather than haute couture; to Aug 9
● Roger Ballen: This Africa. Works representing South Africa's white rural poor, by the American photographer (b.1950); to Jun 21

SALZBURG

CONCERT

Salzburg Cathedral
Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir, conducted by Ton Koopman in a concert which opens a four-day festival of Baroque music; May 29

SAN FRANCISCO

CONCERTS

Davies Symphony Hall
Tel: 1-415-864 6000
www.sfsymphony.org
● San Francisco Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas in works by Mozart, Lukas Foss, Stravinsky and Berg. With soprano Renée Fleming and horn soloist A David Krehbel; May 23
● San Francisco Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas in Mahler's Symphony No. 2, Resurrection. With soprano Rebecca Evans, mezzo-soprano Florence Culvar, and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus; May 27, 28, 29

ST PETERSBURG

EXHIBITION

State Hermitage Museum
French Master Drawings from the Pierpoint Morgan Library: featuring 120 drawings, sketchbooks and albums. Highlights include works by Cézanne, Delacroix, Ingres and Poussin; to Jul 25

STRATFORD

THEATRE

Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon
Tel: 44-1789-285 623
● The Merchant of Venice: by Shakespeare. Directed by Gregory Doran and designed by Robert Jones. With Philip Voss and Helen Schlesinger
● The Tempest: by Shakespeare. Directed by Adrian Noble and designed by Anthony Ward. With David Calder and Robert Glenister
● Measure for Measure: by Shakespeare. Directed by Michael Boyd and designed by Tom Piper. With Stephen Boxer and Clare Holman
● Twelfth Night: by Shakespeare. Directed by Adrian Noble and designed by Anthony Ward. With Stephen Boxer, Philip Voss and David Calder

TOKYO

CONCERTS

Suntory Hall
Tel: 81-3-3584 8999
● City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Sir Simon Rattle in works by Brahms and Beethoven. With violin soloist Ida Hendel; May 25
● Japan Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Ken Takaseki in a programme of works by Tchaikovsky; May 24
● London Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Sir Colin Davis in works by Sibelius; May 24
● Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Mariss Jansons in works by Brahms. With violin soloist Gidon Kremer and cellist Misha Malysky; May 25
● Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Mariss Jansons in works by Beethoven and Shostakovich; May 27

WASHINGTON

CONCERTS

Kennedy Center
Tel: 1-202-467 4600
National Symphony Orchestra: conducted by Leonard Slatkin in works by Vivaldi, Saint-Saëns and Holst. With cello soloist Han-Nai Chang; Concert Hall; May 28, 29

EXHIBITIONS

National Gallery of Art
Tel: 1-202-737 4215
www.nga.gov
● Alexander Calder (1898-1976): around 250 works, among them some of the best examples of Calder's sculpture. Alongside the mobiles and stables are paintings, drawings and jewellery; to Jul 12
● Degas at the Races: horse racing, like the ballet, was an important and longstanding theme in Degas' work. This display comprises 100 variations on this theme; to Jul 12
● Mark Rothko: major retrospective of the American abstract artist, including loans from Europe and Japan; to Aug 16, then touring

National Theatre

Regtime: transfer of the Broadway musical based on E. L. Doctorow's novel, with lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and music by Stephen Flaherty. The director is Frank Galati

Shakespeare Theater

Tel: 1-202-393 2700
Sweet Bird of Youth: by Tennessee Williams. Directed by Michael Kahn, with a cast led by Elizabeth Ashley and Michael Hayden; opens on Tuesday

Arts Guide by Susanna Rustin

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Additional features supplied by ArtBase Tel: 31-23-884 6441 e-mail: artbase@pl.net

Weekend Investor

Wall Street

Fresh view from a Boston stockpicker

But John Authers finds Manhattan is still up-tight about interest rates

Wall Street heard some refreshingly contrarian words from Boston this week. Robert Stansky, the man who for the last two years has taken the weight of Fidelity Investments' \$72bn Magellan fund Atlas-like on his shoulders, was asked his opinion on interest rates. "I have no idea where interest rates are going and I spend zero time trying to work out where they are headed."

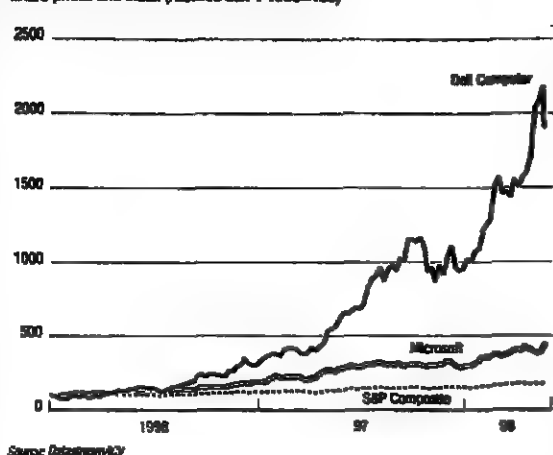
The key to Magellan's performance, according to Stansky, was that he "had to be right on the earnings outlook for the companies I own". This gritty adherence to a stockpicking investment style, rather than repeating Magellan's disastrous move into asset allocation of late 1995, when it took a big stake in bonds, appears to be paying off. His fund now has put its well documented problems of two years ago behind it, and is ahead of the Standard & Poor's 500 index so far this year.

This week's market gyrations show that very few people further down the coast in Manhattan treat interest rates in the same relaxed fashion. The Federal Reserve's Open Markets Committee met on Tuesday to set interest rates, with virtually every commentator who had published an opinion predicting that they would leave rates unchanged. But there is almost equally strong sentiment that the next move in rates, when it comes, will be upwards. So the main equity indexes went into a swoon for a week ahead of the announcement, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average shedding more than 100 points in the three trading days before the Fed spoke.

Then they indulged in a relief rally, with the Dow gaining 116 points on Thursday, fuelled mostly by its interest rate-sensitive financial stocks, such as American Express and JP Morgan. It was symptomatic of a market pausing for breath, and looking for direction, a state of affairs which is likely to continue for some time.

Its rally from February to April, as dealers decided that they could work on the assumption that the Asian crisis had already done its worst, has left stocks at

Rise and rise: Dell puts even Microsoft in the shade. Share prices and index (rebased Jan 1 1996=100)



record multiples. Without strong evidence that their earnings are still growing, it will be difficult for them to move further, while the market will remain vulnerable to worries about monetary policy.

At times like this, there may be more opportunities for old-fashioned stockpickers like Stansky to outperform the market. As he put it: "There are some numbers and valuations which are higher than I would have expected them to be. But I still believe stock prices follow earnings over the long run, and therefore spend most of my time working through estimates."

This approach seems to work well at a time when the market remains highly geared to any information which deviates from expectations. Monday's announcement that the government was declaring war on Microsoft had been well trailed. The justice department launched an anti-trust lawsuit against the world's biggest software company, because it believed Microsoft was trying to use its dominance of operating system software to lever similar dominance of the Internet.

This is the most important antitrust case in decades, giving corporate America its latest chance to wrestle with the problem of reconciling its belief in free markets with the innate tendency of dominant companies to behave monopolistically.

However, the suit followed a flurry of speculation at the end of last week that Microsoft and the government

would hammer out a settlement. As a result, Microsoft shares tumbled from \$99½ to \$84½. The battle lines have now been drawn, and its future share performance could depend critically on the way Microsoft handles the battle for public opinion.

Bill Gates, Microsoft's founder, has already launched a spirited defence, pointing out that Microsoft has provided the platform for a highly competitive computer hardware market. Another of the week's stars, Dell Computer, is the perfect case in point.

As the graph shows, Dell's performance has put even Microsoft's totally in the shade. Its notion that computers are best sold via direct marketing and at a discount, has revolutionised the way computers are sold. Unfortunately, it proved this week that optimism is written into the market. It announced profits ahead of what Wall Street analysts had expected, but behind "whisper" numbers.

Its failure to live up to dealers' unjustified optimism saw it take a horrible dive. After opening the week above \$94, it had slipped by midday yesterday to almost \$86. But anyone who spotted Dell's growth potential two years ago need not be concerned. In May 1996 it was trading at \$6.

Dow Jones Ind Average

Monday	8,050.91 - 45.09
Tuesday	8,054.65 + 3.74
Wednesday	8,171.48 + 116.83
Thursday	8,132.37 - 39.11
Friday	

London

Economics take the floor

Philip Coogan trips the light fantastic

Slow, slow, quick-quick, slow. The UK economy has entered a ballroom dancing phase, gyrating as it crosses the floor and sending observers dizzy with bewilderment. Is it doing the rumba? So it would seem from the inflation figures, which reached a six year high of 4 per cent in April on the headline figure, a number no doubt noted by wage bargainers. The underlying rate jumped to 3 per cent, well above the government's 2.5 per cent inflation target.

Or is the dance a stately waltz? That would appear more likely if one looks at the retail sales numbers which rose by just 0.1 per cent in April and 4.2 per cent over the previous 12 months.

Members of the monetary policy committee view the economy with the suspicious eyes of parents who have just seen their teenage daughter attempt the lambada with her tattooed boyfriend. Every time the British consumer starts hopping around to a speed garage record, the MPC puts on something soothing by Bing Crosby.

But even the MPC seems to take a relaxed view of the UK economy's current efforts. Noted hawk William Butler, who has consistently voted for increases in interest rates, said this week: "I anticipate a further slowdown of the economy as a whole."

"Hopefully, the slowdown will be more evenly distributed across the service sectors and internationally-exposed sectors." Even Mervyn King, the Bank's chief economist and noted inflation sceptic, admitted there were some signs of a slowing economy.

Making matters more difficult for economists are the special factors that surround the latest statistics. The jump in inflation was caused by the government's

increases in indirect taxes and reduction in mortgage tax relief; had the chancellor raised funds through income tax, instead, the figures would have looked a lot better.

And the retail sales numbers may be distorted by the impact of Easter, which was in April this year but in March in 1997. In addition, April's wet weather may have temporarily depressed sales, creating the prospect of a rebound in May.

If the economy is slowing, that is good news on the interest rate front but bad news with regard to corporate earnings, already hit by the Asian crisis and the strength of sterling.

"Analysts' estimates of 8 per cent earnings per share growth in 1998 and particularly 12 per cent in 1999 look too optimistic given the likely delayed impact from sterling and Asia and the slowing profile of current UK domestic growth," comments the UK equity team at Credit Suisse First Boston.



Got to dance: but what steps are being taken by the economy?

substantially reflects a difference in performance. In the early 1980s, the return on equity of FTSE 100 and FTSE 250 companies was virtually the same; in 1997, Footsie stocks earned 19.6 per cent and 250 stocks just 15.3 per cent.

The winners - which have included financials, pharmaceuticals and support services - have managed to ride out the rise in interest rates and currency which have made life so difficult for the losing, largely industrial companies.

Furthermore, the winning sectors have also indulged in an orgy of takeovers, share buy-backs and restructurings which have made them attractive to investors.

The valuation spread has become so wide, suggests CSFB, that it might be time for the balance to be redressed.

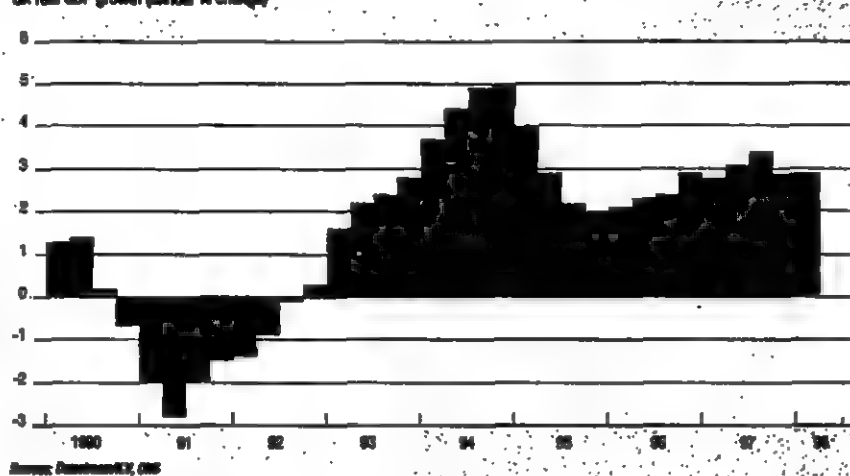
The pressure from interest rates and sterling should ease over the rest of the year and corporate activity among the 20 and industrial stocks is increasing, both in terms of share buy-backs and takeovers.

A recognition of these opportunities has, no doubt, been helping the FTSE 350 and SmallCap indices in their recent repeated surges to all-time highs. The FTSE 100 index, however, has struggled to regain the 6,000 level, closing yesterday at 5,955.6.

For the moment, at least, the medium and smaller-sized stocks, so often the wallflowers in recent years, are the belles of the ball.

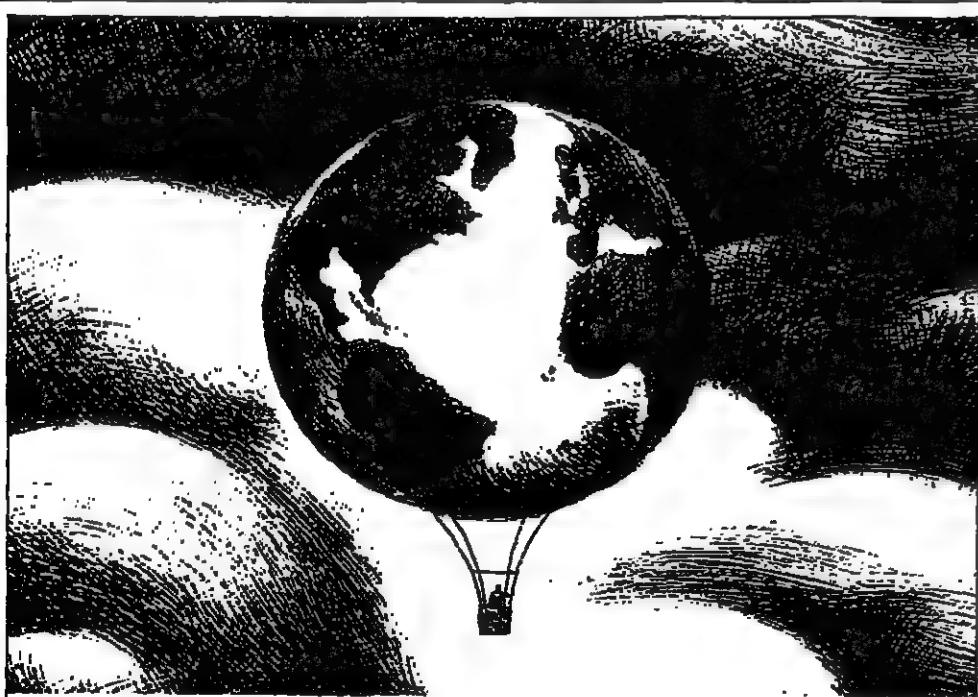
Philip Coogan@FT.com

A dance to the music of the UK real GDP growth (annual % change)



Highlights of the week

	Price	Change	52 week	52 week	
	\$/share	on week	High	Low	
FTSE 100 Index	5955.6	-37.8	6165.5	4857.1	Falling of interest rate hope
FTSE 250 Index	5957.9	+100.0	5957.9	4508.2	Market shuffles
British Steel	90.14	-3	282	42	BT Act: British steel
BP	91.3	-30.4	372	60.74	Weathering oil price
CNN	2162.4	+297.4	2162.4	1190	IT sector strength
Dell Computer	1812.4	-172.6	2162.4	270	Falling of hot operating
General Accident	1438	+123	1438	931	Recovery in insurance
ICI	1191	-39	1244	739.6	ARM: Acron diverges
Micro Group	218	+20.9	223.4	170	Takeover speculation
Miles	3240	+255	3620	1309.6	FTSE 100 rally
Nest	949	+65	950	474	Recovering consumer from company
Powergen	1483	+117	1473	655	Strong & Schuler acquisition plans
Powerlink	794	-33	800	528	Flat profits
Railtrack	1229.4	+43.4	1280	540	Market correction
State	1623	+161	1384	942	Weather shuffles



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Barry Riley

Saving may be splendid

...but an economy needs its spenders, too



Saving we are told - and not always by life assurance companies - is a GOOD IDEA. This week, for instance, the UK Treasury reaffirmed the message in a discussion paper on the Individual Savings Accounts to be launched next April. "The government is committed to encouraging more people to save," it said.

The Treasury has an obvious motive for supporting thrift. Governments think that if people accumulate more long-term savings they will demand less from the public purse in their old age in terms of state pensions and other social security benefits.

But if people try to save at a faster rate than the economy can generate attractive investment opportunities these calculations may go badly wrong. An economy needs spenders, too.

We have become used to regarding excessive savings as a theoretical problem; we might come across it in textbooks about the 1930s but in the modern era it has normally been displaced by the opposite problem of excessive demand. We now see in Japan, however, an example of a large modern economy sliding into a pit of inadequate spending. Nor should we treat it as an isolated case.

Two economic shifts are requiring a rethink of growth theories. One, a short-term phenomenon, is the collapse of the Asian economic miracle, which was classically financed by high savings. The most naive theory of economic growth is

that because the amount of savings in an economy equals the volume of investment, more savings will create more investment and therefore more growth.

For a long time this has looked plausible. Economic growth has been much higher in Korea, for instance, where the household saving rate has been 18 per cent of income, than in countries like Japan and Germany, where the

overinvestment has created vast excess capacity, leading to a collapse in returns on capital and therefore of financial values. The slowcoach US has meanwhile picked up speed, demonstrating that it is the quality, not the quantity, of investment that really counts.

Asians should spend more. The Americans like to offer such advice. But in a slump things do not work like that. The

Those irresponsible spend-now-pay-later Americans may just have a point, after all

equivalent saving rate has been about 13 per cent in recent years. The US, for all those stories of ageing baby boomers squirreling away vast sums in 401(k) pension plans, has big borrowings too, and therefore a pathetic household saving rate of 4 per cent, according to conventional wisdom. It is condemned to the economic slow lane.

These differences in household saving rates are particularly dramatic, but it is more valid to look at total savings in an economy, including the public and business sectors.

Globally, on IMF definitions, saving runs at 23 per cent of GDP. In recent years the US has saved about 17 per cent, Europe some 20 per cent, and Asia - including Japan - a formidable 30 per cent-plus.

But the naive link between high savings and rapid growth has broken down. Asian

Japanese, for the first time in decades, are fearful of their job security, and are putting even more away for a rainy day. Deflation, meanwhile, has the disastrous effect of motivating consumers to wait for prices to come down. Japanese domestic new car sales are down 19 per cent so far this year.

Here we come to the second, longer-term change. Populations are ageing nearly everywhere. This is already leading to plenty of scare talk about future pensions crises. But there will be other important effects, notably that in many countries workforces will stop growing and early in the 21st century will start to shrink. Economic growth rates will decline, and maybe will go negative in the worst-affected countries - like Italy and Spain, which face a demographic catastrophe by 2050.

Demography is a crucial factor

in Japan's plight. The country needs to spend its way out of trouble, and the government will have to do the consuming if the individual citizens refuse. But with the population ageing so fast, a spending campaign would lead to fiscal disaster in the easily foreseeable future. It is a trap.

More generally, there is a paradox. Governments, including the British one, hope that extra savings will provide an answer for the future pensions crisis. But if economic growth is going to decelerate it is hard to see that extra investment could be justified. Perhaps the capital can be directed overseas, as when surplus Scottish savings opened up North America in the late 19th century. But we are fast running out of credible emerging markets.

Without the heroic efforts of America's spenders, the rest of the world's savers would already be in an awful mess. This week's US trade figures showed an excess of \$15bn for March, and the annualised trade gap is now approaching \$150bn. Meanwhile Japan's imports fell by 14 per cent in April and its trade surplus is running at over \$100bn a year.

Perhaps the incentives are the wrong way around. We may begin to see governments increase the taxes on saving and reduce them on consumption. Those irresponsible spend-now-pay-later Americans may just have a point, after all.

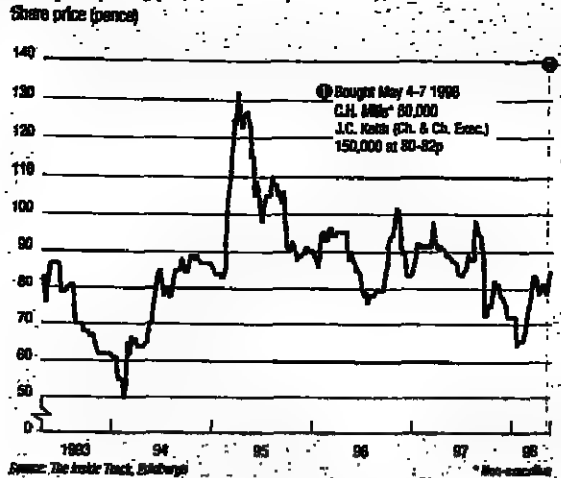
Offshore managed funds and UK managed funds are listed in Section One

WEEKEND INVESTOR

Last week's interim results

Company	Sector	Half year to	Profit (pence)	Interim dividend (pence)
Abertis Asset	OTM	Mar	3.89 (2.98)	1.5 (1.25)
Abertis Asset	OTM	Mar	1.76 (0.828)	0.65 (0.75)
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Abertis Asset	OTM	Mar	1.76 (0.828)	0.65 (0.75)

Horace Small Apparel



Directors' dealings

There was much buying at Horace Small Apparel, the uniforms and corporate clothing manufacturer, writes Ian Forrest. Colin Keith, chairman and chief executive, and Christopher Mills, non-executive director, bought 230,000 shares between them at 80-82p each. The shares have underperformed the market by 31 per cent over the last year.

There was also buying at property group Hambro Countrywide where Harry Hill, the managing director, and Michael Andrews, a non-executive director, bought 123,200 shares between them at 129-130p each. Andrews bought 110,000 shares, increasing his holding to 280,000.

Four directors at RPS Group, the environmental consultancy group, sold 172,456 shares at 318-325p. However, all the directors retain large holdings.

In the Pink

Ethical investing: the two things I will not buy

Many investment prejudices make little sense, says John Train. But he draws the line at smoking and gambling

John Train is chairman of Montrose Advisers Investment Managers in New York

Socially responsible investing often reflects the prejudices of the speaker. Some say, for instance, it would not do to invest in companies without labour unions.

Yet the best companies may pay more than the union scale and offer better conditions, so a union has trouble getting a grip. Is that bad?

Some socially conscious investors will not buy defence-related companies. I find that eccentric. It is better to avoid wars, but they do come along from time to time - particularly to countries who seem unprepared to defend themselves - and if we are to send our troops to fight and if we need to die, we certainly want them to have the best equipment available.

If we do not make the munitions at home, or make them badly, we may have to scramble to buy them abroad when trouble begins - an unhappy predicament.

A hardy few believe socially responsible investing means not buying pharmaceutical companies - manifestly silly! To my mind, avoiding companies doing business in South Africa in the bad old days was much the same fallacy.

There are, however, two areas in which I do refuse to invest: tobacco and gambling.

Tobacco kills hundreds of thousands of people a year, and if a young person decides to smoke he or she is sacrificing about one day a week of future life.

Gambling - including lotteries - further impoverishes the poor by appealing to their weakness. Is it proper to encourage a national lottery as a source of funding for interesting projects? I hold that it is not.

First, lottery proceeds do

A lottery is, of course, a regressive tax: in terms of their means, it falls disproportionately upon the poor. That is acceptable in a "sin tax", such as that on cigarettes, which discourages their consumption.

However, a state lottery is different: it invariably tries to encourage people to participate in this iniquitous activity.

Why are lotteries iniquitous? There are many reasons, both moral and economic.

good purpose.

By this token, the same argument might be applied to buying stolen goods. But a virtuous person would not touch them.

Further, since state lotteries advertise and thus incite increased use, it is a bit like old-time shipwreckers enticing mariners on to a reef in order to rob them.

In fact, though, my main objection to lotteries as a form of public finance is more serious than these.

It is that by fallaciously - as I have tried to explain above - attributing specific good results to a specific negative activity, whether gambling, smoking or theft, it applies a moral whitewash to that activity.

To give an extreme example, suppose that a country with state pawn shops decided to accept stolen goods in those pawn shops, and to advertise this will.

I would argue that this was a deplorable rationalisation. And it is not so remote from financing government expenditure through a lottery.

Anyway, I decline to invest in casinos, gambling equipment or lottery management companies.

And for me, firms involved in encouraging the public to speculate in commodities or derivatives fall in the same category. That, too, is a predatory activity, designed to fleece the customers, not build their wealth.

We hear it said that gambling cannot be stopped, and therefore we might as well turn the proceeds to a

not go to a specific purpose. Second, the whole procedure whitewashes iniquity.

Let me explain. Water from the tap does not go into one end of the bathtub and not the other. Similarly, attributing the proceeds of this or that tax or levy to some particular end-purpose is essentially meaningless, since ultimately all tax money flows into the tub, as it were, and then flows out of the tub.

So the question is not whether we want to have a lottery to raise money for a museum or to restore a monument, but, rather, whether that is the best use of the public funds available, and whether we want to raise funds by such means.

The money a poor family sets aside for gambling or the lottery is not budgeted for family purposes. The occasional big win is likely to be blown on a one-time extravagance

The moral argument is that any variety of gambling "dulls the edge of husbandry"; it slightly weakens the character of the population that participates, and very often gives rise to corruption at governmental level.

We hear it said that gambling cannot be stopped, and therefore we might as well turn the proceeds to a

Results due next week

Company	Sector	Announcement date	Dividend (pence)	Last year	This year
Abertis Asset	OTM	Wednesday	3.0	8.0	-
Abertis Asset	OTM	Wednesday	10.2	34.5	11.5
Abertis Asset	OTM	Wednesday	4.5	12.4	4.8
Abertis Asset	OTM	Wednesday	1.0	1.0	1.0
Abertis Asset	OTM	Wednesday	10.2	34.5	11.5
Abertis Asset	OTM	Wednesday	4.5	12.4	4.8
Abertis Asset	OTM	Wednesday	1.0	1.0	1.0
Abertis Asset	OTM	Wednesday	10.2	34.5	11.5
Abertis Asset	OTM	Wednesday	4.5	12.4	4.8
Abertis Asset	OTM	Wednesday	1.0	1.0	1.0

Directors' share dealings

Transactions in own companies: 11th - 18th May 1998

Company	Director	Shares	Value	No of transactions
Abertis Asset	Colin Keith	230,000	750	1
Abertis Asset	Christopher Mills	230,000	750	1
Abertis Asset	Harry Hill	110,000	375	1
Abertis Asset	Michael Andrews	110,000	375	1
Abertis Asset	Colin Keith	230,000	750	1
Abertis Asset	Christopher Mills	230,000	750	1
Abertis Asset	Harry Hill	110,000	375	1
Abertis Asset	Michael Andrews	110,000	375	1
Abertis Asset	Colin Keith	230,000	750	1
Abertis Asset	Christopher Mills	230,000	750	1

Last week's preliminary results

Company	Sector	Year	Profit (pence)	Share price (pence)	Dividend (pence)
Abertis Asset	OTM	Mar	3.89 (2.98)	1.5 (1.25)	1.5 (1.25)
Abertis Asset	OTM	Mar	1.76 (0.828)	0.65 (0.75)	0.65 (0.75)
Abertis Asset	OTM	Mar	3.89 (2.98)	1.5 (1.25)	1.5 (1.25)
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Abertis Asset	Michael Andrews	110,000	375	1
Abertis Asset	Colin Keith	230,000	750	1
Abertis Asset	Christopher Mills	230,000	750	1

Bids and deals

Seagram, Canadian drinks and entertainment group, has agreed to acquire Polygram, Dutch music and film company, for \$10.6bn (\$8.5bn) in cash and shares, won the battle for More Music.

The deal will be partly financed by the flotation of Tropicana, Seagram's fruit juice subsidiary and the sale of Polygram's film division. The bid is a tender offer, worth \$1.117 a share, for the 75 per cent of Polygram owned by Philips, the electronics company, and the 25 per cent in public issue.

Clear Channel Communications appeared to have won the battle for More Music, the bus shelter and billboard company, after rival bidder Decaux's \$475m offer was referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Clear Channel raised its offer to match the Decaux bid, which lapsed as a result of the referral.

Current takeover bids and mergers

Company	Value of bid (pence)	Market cap (pence)	Market cap (pence)	Market cap (pence)
Abertis Asset	100	100	100	100
Abertis Asset	100	100	100	100
Abertis Asset	100	100	100	100
Abertis Asset	100	100	100	100
Abertis Asset	100	100	100	100
Abertis Asset	100	100	100	100
Abertis Asset	100	100	100	100
Abertis Asset	100	100	100	100
Abertis Asset	100	100	100	100
Abertis Asset	100	100	100	100

Rights issues

Old English Pubs is to raise £20.5m via a 1-3 @ 350p rights issue

Offers for sale, placements & introductions

Belgo is to raise £7.1m via placing of 53.5m shares @ 40p

City North is placing 7,500,000 Old Shares at 145p

Orbit is to raise £13.4m via placing of 27.5m shares @ 48p and a 1-for-3 open offer

Superscope VR is to raise £5m via placing of 3.07m shares @ 170p

New issues

Computaser, the biggest UK computer distributor and services group, made its debut on the stock market on Thursday following a share offering that was more than 10 times oversubscribed. The shares were priced at 670p, which capitalised the company at £1.1bn. But strong demand on the secondary market pushed the price up to 765p at the close, raising the valuation to £1.3bn.

As a result, shares still held in the company by the founders Philip Hulme, the chairman, and Peter Ogden, a non-executive director, were worth around 2600m. The two men received £33.5m and £30.8m from selling shares.

Coca-Cola Beverages, the fizzy drinks bottler, is to float on the London and Sydney markets through an institutional placing expected to value it at about £1.5bn. The company is active in 13 central and eastern European countries. It is being created by the demerger by Australia-listed Coca-Cola Amatil of its European Coke businesses.

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Have taste, will travel

If it's Tuesday, it must be Tanglewood - Andrew Clark invites you to join him on a trip Around the World in 80 Performances

In Jules Verne's celebrated novel *Around the World in Eighty Days*, the author ends his tale with a chapter "in which it is shown that Philaeas Fogg gained nothing by his tour around the world unless it was happiness". It is a philosophical point that today's global traveller could well ponder. In an age in which you can fly around the world in something approaching 80 hours, how many of us could be confident that the journey would leave us happier? And what would be the purpose - unless happiness was the outcome? The sense of adventure and achievement which Verne envisaged more than a century ago has been reduced to an airline timetable. Unlike Fogg, you can't even hope to get chased by Red Indians. Visa restrictions abound. The world on your TV screen has reduced the scope for the unexpected.

But what about *Around the World in Eighty Days*? Now there's a voyage for the intrepid. You would gain nothing of material value - in fact, it would be a trip of gargantuan expense - but you would almost certainly be happier for it, because the art lover who travels hopefully never travels in vain. The 1998 summer arts traveller is a latter-day Fogg. An 80-performance odyssey would demand many of the same qualifications as Verne's hero - stamina, curiosity, patience, chutzpah. And, like Fogg, you would need to exercise unrelenting quality control.

Today's cultural gourmand can follow an itinerary almost as varied and exotic as Fogg's. The arts division of the travel industry is undergoing exceptional growth: you can choose archaeology tours in Syria and Egypt, visual arts holidays in Spain; you can study Palladian villas in Italy and listen to Schubert in Austria; or go to the opera in Prague, Provence and St Petersburg. Some companies offer independent travellers a tailor-made package, embracing flights, hotels and tickets for the performance of your choice - plus optional backstage tours.

But Philaeas Fogg's 1998 successor will have none of that. The intrepid arts traveller is already a performance junkie - knowledgeable about when to apply for tickets, where to find accommodation, how to avoid the pack. He/she is wary of "tourist festivals"; is eager to chase operas or plays not previously encountered; would be as happy listening to Wagner in Seattle as in Bayreuth; is restlessly inquisitive about young singing, acting and directing talent. The time for sight-seeing is limited. You will need to do tail performances with care, and like Fogg, you will probably want to travel anti-clockwise round the globe - with the advantage, as he discovered, that you gain a day by journey's end. You may not reside at 7 Savile Row in London, as Verne's hero did, but you would do well to start and end your journey in the UK.

If you make the necessary arrangements by mid-June, you can snap up Brittan and Ian Bostridge on the windswept Suffolk coast at Aldeburgh - an untestable combination for those susceptible to this tenor's vulnerable English purity. A car will come in handy for that, and for a visit to the Italianate gardens of Garsington Manor in Oxfordshire, where you can catch *La Pietra del paragone*, a Rossini opera which even seasoned visitors to Pesaro, the composer's birthplace in Italy, will find absent from their 1998 schedule.

Each summer, the relative merits of Garsington and Glyndebourne are weighed by opera buffs from far and near. Suffice it to say that Glyndebourne's standards of musical preparation and theatrical presentation are superior to Garsington's, but its gardens and restaurants are not. If you plan carefully, you can catch three operas at each by the third week in June - including the new Glyndebourne production of Handel's *Rodelinda*, in which the estimable German countertenor Andreas Scholl will be heard singing the aria "Art thou troubled?".

But don't tarry, or you'll miss Valery Gergiev's White Nights festival in St Petersburg (Fogg would surely have allowed himself a tiny bit of clockwise travel for the sake of Gergiev, whose superhuman energies would have left even him gasping). Coinciding with the summer solstice, when the sun dips below the horizon for only a couple of hours a night, the White Nights are the best

So this summer we'll reluctantly pass up Kuhmo, and take the train from Petersburg to Helsinki, with a brief detour to Savonlinna for *Tammiöuser and Cav and Pag*. Despite the fact that Savonlinna now boasts a McDonald's, the festival still has an old-fashioned simplicity that makes an appealing contrast to comparable events elsewhere. Finland is enjoying a boom in good voices; the acoustic of Olaf's Castle is ideal for Wagner; and, if last year's performances are anything to go by, *Cav and Pag* will be a shocker of mesmerising showmanship, with Savonlinna's magnificent chorus on stage and the estimable Eri Klas summoning full-blooded sounds from the pit.

You can fly back to Helsinki after the performance - just in time to catch the overnight boat to Sweden. Safely landed in Stockholm, take the steamer to Drottningholm, and enjoy a stroll through its palatial grounds before one of this summer's Gluck performances. The little court theatre has - to our great good fortune - never been tarted up, and the opportunity to savour the Gustavian echoes of one of Gluck's Reform operas is not to be missed. Can someone arrange a fly-past of geese in the interval, just as I saw it two summers ago?

Geese or no geese, it's time to fly to the south of France for Brook's Mozart, and to Burgundy for Rameau's *Zoroastre*. How often do we get the chance to hear a five-act *tragédie lyrique* conducted by that honorary Frenchman, William Chris-

It would be a journey of gargantuan expense - but the art lover who travels hopefully never travels in vain

excuse for visiting St Petersburg. Here you will need Fogg-like adaptability in coping with last-minute changes to the programme, for which Gergiev is renowned.

One of the festival's strengths is that it presents a broader artistic picture of the Kirov than can be glimpsed when the company is on tour. Those who saw its recent all-Russian offerings in New York, for example, may be unaware of Gergiev's achievement in building a company capable of first-rate performances of Italian and German operas.

If you wanted to notch up the greatest number of performances in one day, a visit across the border to the chamber music festival at Kuhmo in Finland would be required. Set among woods and lakes near the Arctic Circle, Kuhmo invites musical gluttony. There's round-the-clock activity - most of it irresistible, with first-class musicians of all nationalities congregating for a busman's holiday. The one problem with Kuhmo is that it starts in mid-July - and we have to leave Petersburg at the start of the month if we're going to reach Aix-en-Provence for the first night of Peter Brook's *Don Giovanni*.

tie? With that performance in Beaune on July 11, we bid a temporary farewell to Europe. Whether you journey by balloon, boat or airbus, make sure you land roughly 3,000 miles westwards in New England, where you will find Glimmerglass and the Williamstown theatre festival in full flood - all within an easy day's drive of each other.

My bet for Glimmerglass this summer is Mark Lamos's new production of *Tosca*. Yes, I know we've all seen *Tosca* once too often, but Lamos is different. When he described his production plans to me earlier this season, I was hooked: phrases like "the intersection between religion, art, sex and politics" tripped off his tongue, and I want to see if he can translate them to the stage. He talked of *Rome Open City*, film noir, theatrical realism... well, let's see.

The buzz at Tanglewood is not so much around the Shed, where the big orchestral concerts take place, but in Seiji Ozawa Hall, where I'd like to hear the long-awaited come-back recital of Byron Janis on July 22. From there it's but a leisurely car-ride to Williamstown, where I fancy seeing

Timberlake Wertenbaker's Euripides adaptation and a revival of *The Big Knife* by that notable mid-century chronicler of moral malaise, Clifford Odets.

Before flying west, the temptation to take in a rare modern staging of *John Bull's Other Island* (1904) at the Shaw festival on the Canadian border would be too big to resist. And if a total of 80 performances really is the target, a visit to the Stratford Ontario Festival is obligatory: you can catch up to six plays in two days. From there to Aspen, for the US premiere of Mark Anthony Turnage's *Greek*, and on to Santa Fe, where the pick of this summer's repertoire is *Béatrice et Bénédict*. By this point, you will probably be succumbing to the tactics of today's jet-lagged opera-chasers, who take pills to help them stay awake in Act 3. A pause for breath is needed - and where better than the Sangre de Cristo mountains, with their mix of cultures and traces of ancient civilisation?

The next stop must be Seattle for *Twissan and Lucille* with those two redoubtable Wagnerian heavyweights, Ben Happer and Jane Eaglen. If Francesco Zambello's production of the performance should be seriously interesting. Crossing the Pacific to Japan, we could squeeze in a day or two at Matsumoto - enough to take in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* and the spectacle of a Seiji Ozawa children's concert in the foothills of the Japanese Alps. Resisting the dubious attraction of *Turandot* in Beijing's Forbidden City in early September, we would arrive back in Europe just in time to take in Brian McMaster's Smetana retrospective at Edinburgh. Thence to London to witness Andrew Davis bringing his baton down on the 1998 Proms.

In *Around the World in Eighty Days*, Verne brought the saga of Philaeas Fogg to its conclusion with a series of questions. "What had he really gained by all this trouble? What had he brought back from the long and weary journey?" *Around the World in Eighty Days* would yield more than a treasury of aural and visual memories: it would confront Fogg's 1998 successor with a set of ideas about man and his aspirations. If the journey was undertaken in the right company, it would indeed make this summer's arts traveller "the happiest of men".

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SUMMER ARTS GUIDE

Dance

Many joys, and some sorrows

Clement Crisp limbers up for a bustling summer scene

There has been a real balletic drought in the past few months. One of the many causes for complaint about Covent Garden's inept policies was its betrayal of audiences. No cogent plans were made to provide ballet for a public that may well repay company neglect with box-office neglect. Matters are now improving, and the summer dance scene, in London and elsewhere, is bustling – if not invariably attractive.

On national terms, there will be a short Royal Ballet season at the Barbican in London (June 15-20) which will offer a homage to Dame Ninette de Valois as she celebrates her centenary. And the Barbican will later bring a season by Twyla Tharp and her company (July 27-August 8) with two lively programmes. (On the night before the opening, Twyla Tharp will stage *The One Hundred*, a huge choreographic shout in which a hundred participants will learn dance phrases which will then be performed in one blast of energy. I saw it 30 years ago, and it is huge fun – rather like a supernova.)

Earlier, in June, Trisha Brown will direct and choreograph Monteverdi's *Orfeo* at the Barbican. (Miss Brown's choreography affects me like an endless meal of like swallows, jazz musicians flock not only to Europe every summer and their feet barely touch the ground. Each year, seemingly, another town puts on a new show – and the established festivals get bigger and more diverse. London bathes in blue notes all year round but especially so in summer. The Barbican Centre's celebration of American jazz continues from Thursday (May 28) with a rare appearance from the urbane and absurd Jazz Passengers, fronted by singer Debbie Harry.

The programme continues with clarinetist Don Byron's *Existential Dred* (June 12), the Grammy-winning Michael Brecker Band (July 5), McCoy Tyner's Latin Allstars (July 11), and a Herbie Hancock double header, first with a quartet and then accompanied by the original Headhunters (July 18-19).

London's Royal Festival Hall is the focus of attention for South African music, coinciding with Nelson Mandela's 80th birthday celebrations. Township rhythms meet classical style in the Soweto String Quartet (June 28). Flery jazz trumpeter Hugh Masekela leads the main event (July 18) and vocal choir Ladysmith Black Mambazo with pianist Abdullah Ibrahim provide a meditative conclusion (July 26).

Other visitors under the "Serious Summer" banner include Senegalese vocal star Baaba Maal, the jazz gospel vocal ensemble Take Six, the Blues Brothers Band and Brazil's leading vocal duo, Gilberto Gil and Marisa Monte.

Wigan in Lancashire is not widely recognised as a centre for the arts, but it hosts a jazz festival (July 10-16) whose line-up compensates for what it

water-biscuits, but others have a taste for her work.)

As a promise of good things to come, I report that in October (1-3) Slobban Davies will bring her company with its new and dazzlingly good creations: very well worth your time. The Royal Ballet then moves to the Coliseum (July 7-30) for a repertoire season of *Bayadere*, *Manon*, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and

The adorable Tamara Rojo is promised as a first-night Juliet

(gosh, how daring!) three performances of a triple bill. Igor Zeleny will be a guest. Send not to know for whom the programming bell tolls.

Meantime, in Birmingham, that city's Royal Ballet will pay its own tribute to Dame Ninette with a revival of her deliciously funny *The Prospect Before Us*, *Symphonic Variations* and a new piece by David Bintley which uses John Tavener's *The Protecting Veil* as score (June 3-6). In late June, early July, the company will be on tour in South Africa.

In Paris, the Opera Ballet will

sail through May, June and July, with performances at the Palais Garnier and the Bastille of stagings to pull in the passing trade: *Don Quixote*, *Manon* (MacMillan's production, playing in London and Paris at the same time – and this was the ballet at whose first performances certain observers decided it was not really up to snuff), *Romeo and Juliet* in Nureyev's staging, and *Giselle*. Despite difficulties in finding hotel rooms in Paris while the *coupe de monde* winds its ghastly way, these stagings and the Opera's superlative casting are worth your time and money.

In Edinburgh, the Festival offers some mixed delights. The Pacific Northwest Ballet from Seattle is an important outpost of Balanchine works and will show his delightful *Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Playhouse from August 20-22.

Thereafter there is much Dutch choreography, celebrating Hans van Manen's output, with the Dutch National Ballet and Nederlandse Dans II and III presenting 13 of his ballets (August 24-30).

In London, English National Ballet will present another large-scale staging at the Albert Hall. Derek Deane is mounting a new *Romeo and Juliet* for this arena setting: vast cast, a good deal of



Beats of energy: Twyla Tharp's company, scheduled to perform two programmes at London's Barbican

Photo: Janet P. Levitt

vivid street-fighting, we may suppose, and at its heart, the lovers – casting thus far promises the adorable Tamara Rojo as the first-night Juliet (performances from June 18-20).

An attractive novelty this summer will be the arrival of a small contingent from New York City Ballet, including Darci Kistler, Wendy Whelan and Peter Boal. Works promised include *Agosto* and a new pas de deux from Christopher Wheeldon. (Evenings only: July 30-August 2). New York City Ballet will be part, this year as every year, of the dance

crush at Lincoln Center Plaza in New York, when the company plays its big summer season at the State Theatre (until June 26) with a glorious repertoire, while American Ballet Theatre is installed below the fountains at the Met, with a big repertoire from until July 4. The fans contrive to dash from one theatre to another in an evening to catch up with new works, new dancers: happy times!

Stockholm is European City of Culture and next month (the light humous; the city shining) the Royal Swedish Ballet offers a

festival to mark 225 years of its existence. Fascinating repertoire on view from June 5 to 13, historical (at wonderful Drottningholm) and modern. Much to look forward to. And in Copenhagen, the Royal Danish Ballet will play mixed repertoire during the summer, including a revised *Napoli*, which is a perfect work of art and a joy to mankind. Meanwhile, in enchanting Graz (if you go, take the train from Vienna, it passes through prettiest scenery, with all the romantic appurtenances of rocks and distant castles), the Kirov Ballet appears at

the Opera House between July 1 and 21, with *Swan Lake*, *La Bayadere*, *Sleeping Beauty* and a Folke evening. (Details of this and most other performances are listed each month in *The Dancing Times*.)

There are other, smaller events, of course. A certain caution is advised – especially in the belief that the word "Festival" means what it says. A delicious meal is more rewarding than the fearful struggles you may be offered, mounted in the sacred name of dance, to trap the unwary visitor.

Jazz

Township rhythms meet classical style

Garry Booth bathes in the blue notes

may lack in other departments. Allister Phil Woods' Big Band, crooner Diana Krall and Assie trumpet demon James Morrison are the focus of attention this year.

Brecon Jazz (August 7-9) has the right stuff: a tasteful but varied programme with flexible booking which includes concerts day and night, indoors and outdoors, all within easy reach. But the party atmosphere that envelopes the Welsh market town's festival belies its efficient running. This year's main attractions include French pianist Michel Petrucci, US trumpet star Roy Hargrove with a big band, saxman Branford Marsalis and the statesman-like pianist Ahmad Jamal.

Glasgow's International Jazz Festival (June 26-July 5) revolves around evening gigs in the merchant city's Old Fruit Market, an interesting venue which is made up to resemble a convivial, over-the-top club. Appropriately, groovy BS organist Jimmy Smith opens there on July 1 and is followed later in the week by bluesman Buddy Guy and saxophonist Chico Freeman, among others. Riverboat shuffles sail on June 26 and July 3.

The European jazz circuit is in full swing in July. Lakeside Montreaux (July 3-19), now in its 32nd year, provides the most reliably eclectic programme. This year's headliners include non-jazzers Bob Dylan, Björk, Phil Collins and a Celtic showcase (1) Bob

Geldof. Jazz as most people know it, in the substantial shape of pianist Oscar Peterson, is saved until the last night.

Jazz à Vienne, in the South of France, has a more balanced, no less spectacular bill (June 30-July 13). Crowd-pullers B.B. King and Eric Clapton are promised this year, as well as a selection of stellar jazz names. Be there on July 7 to hear Herbie Hancock, Mike Brecker, Dave Holland, John Scofield and Jack de Johnette share the stage. The sophisticated sounds of pianist Ahmad Jamal and tenorist Joe Henderson materialise later in the programme.

Vienne should not be confused with Vienna, whose jazz fest (July 2-10) is a more genteel affair. Guitarist George Benson and pianist Chick Corea appear at the Staatsoper (July 6 and 7 respectively) as do the popular vocal groups Manhattan Transfer and Take Six (July 8). Austria's most famous (only?) jazz export, fusion pioneer Joe Zawinul, plays a club gig earlier in the week.

This year's visitors at Istanbul's established and widely respected International Festival (July 7-18) range from the Blues Brothers to the Michael Nyman Band; Kenny Garrett, John McLaughlin, McCoy Tyner's All Star Latin Band and a Lee Konitz trio are the jazz high points in between.

At the 33rd jazz festival at Port (July 11-19) Tony

Bennett and Taj Mahal provide two contrasting takes on the art of crooning. The Finnish city's huge programme also includes tenorist James Moody, Jamaican pianist Monty Alexander and cult US college groovers Medeski, Martin & Wood.

The Hague's North Sea Jazz (July 10-12) has the dubious distinction of being the biggest festival to be held under one roof. This mammoth event puts together old and young, modern and mainstream. This year's veterans include Slide Hampton, Tommy Flanagan, Milt Jackson and Stanley Turrentine, among the young contenders are James Carter, Courtney Pine and David Sanchez. As ever, big bands make a strong showing and this year's treats include, from New York, the Mingus Big Band and the Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra.

So much for the name-dropping festivals. My own favourite, the Festival de Django Reinhardt, does without stars. For one blissful weekend (June 26-28) the jazz guitarist's last resting place, Samois-sur-Seine, becomes a mecca for lovers of hot jazz. The small stage on the Ile Berceuse – which this year features Django's son and musical heir, Babik, Christian Scoude and Didier Lockwood – is almost a side-show to the impromptu jams happening around town. All you'll need is a FR290 for a weekend ticket, a tent and a carton of Carlsberg.



Redefined for the 1990s: 'oldies' Robert Plant and Jimmy Page, again

Photo: Mick Hutton

Live rock

Mud-spattered music

The spirit of Woodstock, they used to call it: when rock music could break out of the confines of woofer and tweeter and work its weird magic amid the mud and mayhem of an adoring, complacent and invariably pharmacologically challenged audience.

The rock festival was a mighty phenomenon in the 1960s. At Woodstock itself, the crowd was famously urged to chant to the heavens to stop the rain. It didn't, but who noticed? There was free love (though not as much as was alleged), bad acid, wonderful music: the grotesquely distorted patriotism of Jimi Hendrix's "Star-Spangled Banner", the bombast of The Who, the dippy, gentle vibe of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young.

Live rock events were seen as such important cultural signifiers that one of them, Altamont, was regarded as the definitive turning point between 1960s idealism and 1970s disillusionment, when Hell's Angels murdered a black spectator during the Rolling Stones' set. "Sympathy for the Devil" would never sound the same.

But rock festivals continued to prosper. There is something about tents and mud, improbable treks to unsavoury toilets and idiosyncratic catering which still touches the hearts of rock music fans of a certain – young – age.

Of course there are important differences these days. You can book your tickets – and they don't come cheap – by credit card over the phone or via the internet. There are giant video

screens hovering over the stage to give you that intimate feel as you peer at the microscopic figures in the distance. And the sound, formerly an indistinct wall of white noise, has undoubtedly cleaned up, although the notes hit you some time after they are plucked on stage, which can be disconcerting.

There is the usual proliferation of festivals this year, featuring just about every

make his Glastonbury debut. Other big names include Blur, Pulp, Tori Amos, and Robbie Williams.

If a couple of days is not enough to satiate the appetite, the Phoenix festival at Long Marston, Stratford-upon-Avon, the UK's only four-day festival (July 16-19) is designed for the more durable punter. Main attractions include Ocean Colour Scene, New Order and Prong.

On a more civilised note, that great eclectic DJ John Peel has been asked to put together this year's MoJoad festival at the South Bank (June 30 – July 5), and he has invited Cornershop, Damon Albarn and Graham Coxon from Blur, and the Silver Apples to 'get the place grooving'. Peel aficionados will know all about his love of football, and he has made sure that all World Cup games will be displayed on giant screens in the venues' foyers, and that no gig will start while there is still a game on.

Finally, as always, the most musically diverse of all events in 1998 will be the WOMAD world music festival (July 24-26) at Reading's Rivermead site, featuring Ladysmith Black Mambazo (best known as Paul Simon's backing vocalists on *Orythm*) and the Abdullah Ibrahim Trio from South Africa, the Paco Peña Flamenco Company from Spain, Margareth Menezes from Brazil and a host of treats from around the world.

Of the one-day events, the most notable are likely to be the heavy metal Ozfest at Milton Keynes on June 20 (the support bands – Entombed, Human Waste Project, Life of Agony – themselves sound like the reworking of a bad festival day). The Prince's Trust concert at Hyde Park (July 5), including Natalie Imbruglia; the Guinness Fleadh, at Finsbury Park on June 6, with Simple Minds, Sinead O'Connor and The Corrs; and, at the same venue on the following day, Madstock IV with Madness, Finlay Quaye and Desmond Dekker.

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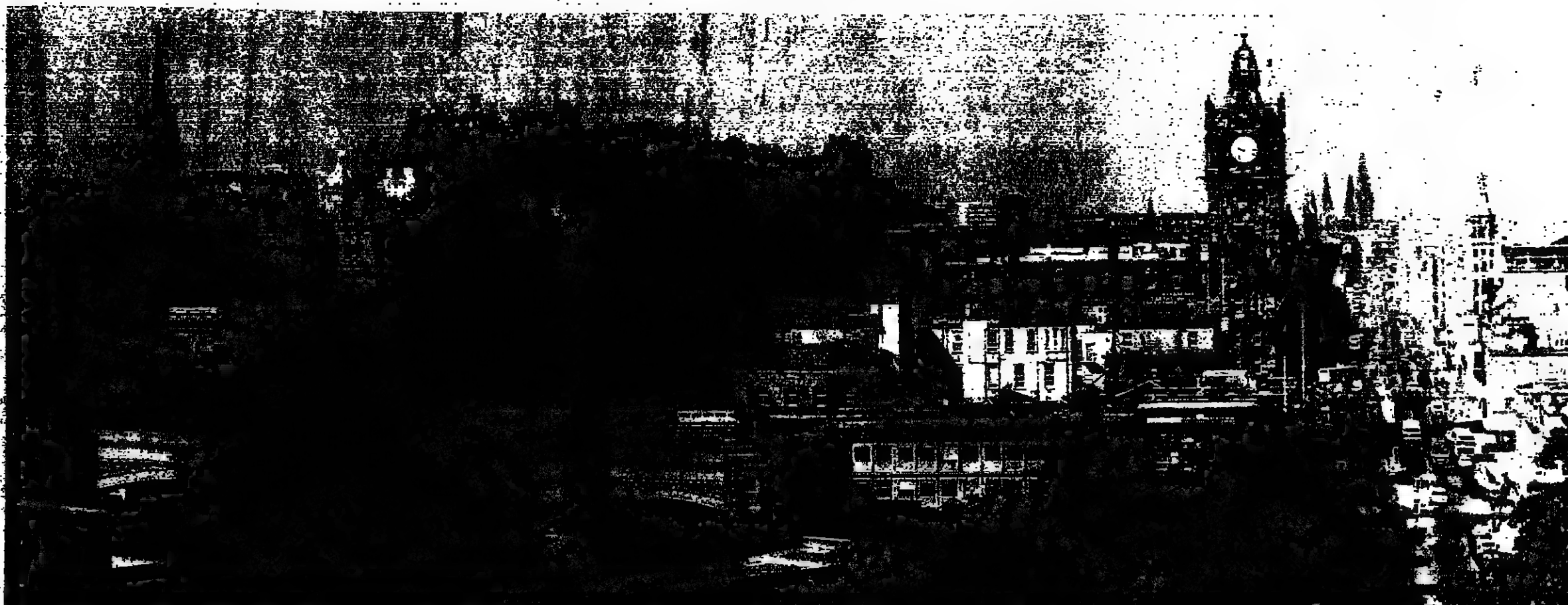
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SUMMER ARTS GUIDE



In the finest of fetters: the city may heave with a million people looking for excitement, but the atmosphere manages to stay festive

Photo: Tony Stone Worldwide

Edinburgh

All set fair for the ultimate festival

Antony Thornicroft reviews the coming attractions for an August that promises to be as frenzied as ever

The Edinburgh International Festival, which this year runs from August 18 to September 5, is in the finest of fetters. Last year's Festival was an artistic phenomenon - it actually made a profit. Ticket sales rose by 7 per cent, and there were almost 250,000 paying festival-goers.

This year advance bookings are well ahead, with some events almost sold out. There will undoubtedly be the usual last-minute cancellations by artists, and some scandal to put up the backs of Edinburgh's few remaining Calvinists, but generally everything is set fair. Even the successful director Brian McMaster, now into his second five-year term, claims he so loves his job that nothing will tear him away, not even running the Royal Opera House Covent Garden.

He will have plenty of opportunities to observe Covent Garden at close quarters during this Festival: it is the resident opera company. During the stay it will perform four Verdi operas based on plays by Schiller. To make this even more of a Festival event, the plays will also be performed. The great attractions are staged performances of the

Carols and a new production of *I Masnadieri*, along with concert performances of *Lulu* by Miller and *Giovanna d'Arco*. Meanwhile, Scottish Opera will be concentrating on the work of Smetana, one of this Festival's featured composers, with a new production of *Dobry* and a concert performance of *Lulu*.

Dance this year concentrates on the choreography of Hans van Manen, plus the British premiere of Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Pacific Northwest Ballet. The drama is solid, serious and international. Apart from the Schiller it includes the British premiere of Eugene O'Neill's unfinished *More Stately Mansions* from New York Theatre Workshop; Racine's *Phedre*; and *Caligula* by Albert Camus. Perhaps the most popular

concerts. The morning recitals at Queen's Hall are already well booked, and to match them this year 12 afternoon concerts at the Usher Hall will feature the songs of Hugo Wolf. As ever, the visual arts fend for themselves, but at the National Gallery of Scotland there will be a show close to the

After 50 years, Festival and Fringe are experimenting with a trial separation, if not a divorce

heart of its director Timothy Clifford: of baroque sculpture from the age of Bernini.

But while August in Edinburgh might be as frenzied as ever, come September the atmosphere will be very different. The Festival continues, but after the August Bank Holiday Monday

most of the Fringe is folding its tents and slipping off. Those two symbiotic partners - the Festival, representing mainly high art, the Fringe, youth culture and the avant garde - after 50 years are experimenting with a trial separation, if not a divorce.

This year the Fringe opens a Fringe venues found that performers wanted to get away and there was just not the audience for them to operate profitably.

The two biggest Fringe venues, the Assembly Rooms and the Traverse, will continue, but the Edinburgh Festival will certainly end in a more subdued environment. This could affect business. In terms of audience the Fringe, which attracts over 600,000 people to around 1,200 shows in almost 200 venues, is far bigger. However, as a precaution the Festival is holding back some events, notably the Smetana operas and much international drama, for the final days.

Although the Festival has raised its game in recent years, over the decades the Fringe could claim to be more artistically creative. In addition to launching alternative comedy, giving vital

exposure to virtually every in-your-face comedian from Rowan Atkinson to Lee Evans. It has furthered the theatrical careers of Tom Stoppard, Richard Eyre and most recently Irvine Welsh.

The Fringe feels, perhaps justifiably, that it has never been given credit for its contribution to Edinburgh in August, not least by the City Council, which has just cut its grant by 15 per cent.

The Festival gives Edinburgh in August artistic muscle, and the Fringe adds excitement. But there are other, more specialist pleasures to be enjoyed. The Jazz and Blues Festival wakes up the city from July 31 to August 5; the International Film Festival will bring premieres and masterclasses to the Filmhouse from August 16 to 30; and the bi-annual Book Festival will be occupying Charlotte Square, with

over 400 events, from August 15-31. The city may heave as a million people compete for excitement, both cerebral and light hearted, but the atmosphere manages to remain, well, festive.

Regular visitors will be interested to see how the atmosphere in the city changes after the Fringe ends. Next year there will be an even greater innovation - the opening of a Festival Centre, thanks to lottery money, with the conversion of the Tollbooth in the Royal Mile. At last there will be club where artists and festival-goers can mingle; where lectures and perhaps performances can take place; where tickets can be bought across the whole range of events happening in Edinburgh in August. It will provide a focus that has been long needed: it will give the Festival a much greater sense of identity.

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SUMMER ARTS GUIDE

Royal Academy Summer Exhibition

Amateurs enjoy their finest hour

It's time to celebrate the annual Show for what it is, says William Packer

The Royal Academy is one of those English institutions that, if it didn't exist, would be impossible to invent: a society of artists, of all things, at the heart of the Establishment. Founded in 1768 by George III in the spirit of the Enlightenment, to bring the best of current art before the public, the Royal Academy has put on its annual summer exhibition ever since, with this year's (June 2 - August 16) the 230th in an unbroken succession.

The Summer Show is thus a unique survival of the great age of salons and academies, and remains the largest open exhibition anywhere of any kind, with anything up to 14,000 works submitted to what will end up as a show, these days, of around 1,300 works.

Its Private View, full of the summer's first frocks and hats, was once held to bring in the social season. It now often falls a little later and the debts are gone, but the annual Academy Dinner that marks its opening remains a great event. To the public at large the exhibition remains immensely popular, for here is current art at its most various and accessible. The processes of selection are the stuff of general mystified interest and sympathy, the inevitable rows and protests the staple of the tabloids, the Show indeed synonymous with the Academy itself. Each year we have stories of proud grandmothers or schoolboy showing for the first time, and always the indignant, rejected artist. It was ever thus, and I love it all.

I must have seen every Summer Show since I came to London as an art student in 1960, and have reviewed all but two or three since I began writing about art some 10 years later. I had my first painting accepted in 1963, and have continued to send in with a fair regularity, though not always with the same success - I too have anxiously waited on the post, and had my breakfast cheered or spoiled as may be; I too have revelled in the treats of non-members' varnishing day - the best of parties - or slunk round to the back door, hoping no one noticed as I picked up the reject. "Oh, the fool! How could they?" - I know what it's like.

What puzzles me is that so many of my fellow critics make no apparent effort to understand the nature of the beast. Good or bad, fair or foul, the same easy criticism is heaped on the Academy, as though by rote; too many pictures, too mixed a bag; unselective, uncritical, undistinguished; too trendy; not trendy enough... oh dear. But

the principles are clear enough. An open exhibition can only be the creature of what is submitted to it, and one respects those artists who would rather not subject their work to the chances of selection and the hurry-burry of the hang. But unless it is a club made up of entirely like-practising artists, an Academy must inevitably show work of vastly different kinds, for Academicians enjoy the right to show up to six works apiece. How can one din it into unreciprocated ears? The Summer Show of the Royal Academy can never be a curated exhibition. And that is precisely its charm.

What we have is a very large and very mixed Show, in which the members of the hanging committee, with a room each, make their choice of the work made available by the jury, not all of which could ever possibly be hung. This is an extremely tricky exercise, and I have to say that, in my long experience of the results, a very fair list is made of it more often than not. Last year, when the Scottish painter, Elizabeth Blackadder, was in charge, the hang overall was very good indeed. This year, so a bird whispers in my ear, we must still keep our fingers crossed. And this as every year, it will be up to the fair and open-minded visitor to do some work, exercising judgment and discretion, testing the eye against what is challenging or surprising and, above all, seeking out what he really loves.

The old lie, that the Academy is full of rubbish, should be nailed for the lie it always was. But a lie repeated is a dangerous thing, when even the Academy itself might begin to fear it is true, and - terrible thought - lose its nerve along with its raison d'être. Even 40 years ago, when the question among artists was: "are you modern or Academic?", and half the present members were swearing they would never go near the place, there were good and honourable artists - Strehler, Monnington, Ward, Eynon, Lowry, de Grey, Wright, John Nash, Algernon Newton, all picked at random from Gallery 1 in the oldest catalogue I have to hand.

And in the years since, under successive presidents from Monnington to de Grey, the old ship of the Summer Show has swung steadily round, back into the mainstream of British art where it belongs. More properly professional in its substance than is ever generally admitted, the Summer Show is at the heart of the Academy's being. It is time to celebrate the Show for what it is.



Clockwise, from left: Van Dyck's alluring Lady Lucy Percy; Stubbs' 'Bay Malton with John Singleton up'; Modigliani's portrait of Bernowski; Monet's 'Water Lily pond and path by the water' (detail)

Salerooms

Let the bidder be wary

Welcome to "London in June". Britain's leading dealers, auction houses and fair organisers have joined forces for the first time this year to promote London as the cultural centre in which to buy a range of spectacular art and antiques that is unrivalled by any other capital city.

London is, of course, the international art market in June and early July. As well as the five major art and antiques fairs (see article on opposite page) and summer shows in the commercial galleries, this six weeks or so sees the city's Big Four houses staging auctions spanning the entire saleroom spectrum. The quantity and quality of the works on offer is still astounding, despite an ever-diminishing supply of museum-quality works of art available on the market. Any collector, dealer or curator of, say, Old Master painting might have to view more than 1,000 pictures, or an Oriental art enthusiast, perhaps 2,000 objects.

According to the British Antique Dealers' Association, more than 1,000 people will attend the London fairs and auctions this season and about £100m will be spent on the London art market, much of it by overseas visitors. Traditionally, at least, a certain number of those converging on London in June and July come as much for

the pleasures of turf (Royal Ascot), court (Wimbledon) and Test match as for the private views and preview parties of Grosvenor House and the like. Here are just a few of the highlights of the auction season that may tempt them.

Dominating the line-up of

Susan Moore tours the auction houses and picks out the pieces most likely to tempt buyers

Sotheby's evening sale of Impressionist and Modern art on June 30, - which promises to be the best seen in Europe for some time - is one of Monet's late, great water-lily canvases of 1900, one of some 18 evocations of the now famous water garden he created at Giverny. "Water-lily pond and path by the water" features the Japanese-style foot-bridge across the pond and the path gently curving through lush purple water-lilies and long grass. Bought by a British private collector at Marlborough in 1964, it has never been exhibited publicly. Sotheby's estimate is at £2m-£3m.

On offer too is Modigliani's portrait of the Polish emigrant Bernowski, painted in Paris in 1918. One of the earliest purchases of Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury, it is now being sold to fund a Unit for Japanese Cultural studies at

the University of East Anglia. A pleasing justification, if any were needed, to spend £2m-£3m.

On July 8 Christie's offers an exceptional group of paintings, early printed books and works of art - a mere tip of this particular iceberg - formerly housed at the 366-room Wentworth Woodhouse

wine cistern by David Williams, exceptionally finely engraved with the Watson-Wentworth coat-of-arms (estimate £500,000-£1m).

The sale includes a group of Italian Renaissance bronzes, an interesting selection of English furniture, and eight of the earliest and rarest printed books in the English language. Only about a dozen copies of William Caxton's *Canterbury Tales* survive. This copy, in near pristine condition despite its 581 years, is the last remaining in private hands. What rich bibliophiles could resist? It could easily soar over its £500,000-£700,000 estimate. The sale is expected to total £2m-£3m.

More exceptional silver is to be found at Sotheby's. The Drury-Lowe-tureen, one of the finest rococo silver extravaganzas of Paul de Lamerie, is under the hammer on June 4, offered on behalf of James Ortis-Parillo and bearing an estimate of £500,000-£800,000.

Essentially English fare is offered on June 9, in Sotheby's first Great British Pictures sale. Here, for instance, Reynolds' portraits of the two wives of the Welsh Mascones Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn bear estimates of £400,000-£500,000 and £500,000-£800,000. Next day, Christie's offers its first auction entirely devoted to sporting art.

The furniture discovery of the year must be the elaborately

carved 17th century side table on offer at Sotheby's on July 10. Made for Queen Mary's Water Gallery at Hampton Court Palace, it appears to be the only surviving piece of furniture designed by the influential royal architect Daniel Marot and made by royal cabinet-maker William Farnborough.

An inscription on the underside in Marot's hand reads "La Gallerie d'Orléans". Another inventory label reveals it also to have been in the studio prop collection of Cecil B. de Mille, and records show that it appeared in at least two early films. Sotheby's expects it to fetch more than £500,000.

The same day Sotheby's is offering the most important pair of Italian Neo-Classical commodes to have come to auction. The work of the leading 18th century Italian goldsmith Luigi Valadier and cabinet-maker Ivo Livinier, these monumental pieces, inlaid with exotic woods, were made for Prince Marcantonio IV Borghese. They are expected to realise something in excess of £500,000; two pairs of Valadier alabaster and white marble vases and candelabra bear estimates of £80,000-£90,000 a pair.

For print collectors, Christie's on July 8 presents the collection of almost 200 Dürer engravings and woodcuts assembled by the late Count Seilern. Estimates are £300-£100,000.

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Art and antiques

Challenge of sifting treasure from trash

Susan Moore on one of the London season's traditional pleasures

The pursuit and purchase of art and antiques is one of the traditional pleasures of the London summer "season". Since 1769, for instance, the Royal Academy of Arts has opened its doors on an annual Summer exhibition showing new work for sale by living artists - painters, sculptors, architects and printmakers (see opposite page).

Now, as in the 18th century, the spotlight on the London art market in June and July focuses more on Old Masters and antiques than on contemporary art, although this year's Grosvenor House Art & Antiques Fair promises marginally more in the way of 20th century works of art. Among the new exhibitors are Waddington Galleries (which offers Picasso and Matisse) and Le Pavillon de Sévres, bringing Art Nouveau and Art Deco porcelain. Richard Green shows Scottish Colourists, Peter Nahum the unlikely delights of Michael Ayrton's depiction of a thrilling pass in an Arsenal v Aston Villa football match.

Established in 1934, this is the flagship of the London fairs. Although, like the Paris Biennale, Grosvenor House remains a predominantly national fair, this year's event brings together some 90 of the world's leading dealers, including Old Master dealers Konrad Bernheimer, Johnny van Haften, Richard Green, Newhouse Galleries and Noortman. Among the antique jewellery dealers and goldsmiths are Asprey, Spink, S. J. Phillips and Fabergé specialists La Vieille Russie.

Silver, furniture, clocks and other objets d'art are the traditional core of this fair. Indeed, Henry Neville, Mallett's director, goes as far as to describe it as "the most important international fair for the decorative arts in the world today".

Most of London's top English and continental furniture dealers take a bow, among them Norman Adams - celebrating his 78th anniversary this year - the Felham Galleries and Apsley-Fredericks. The latter will be unveiling a Queen Anne bureau bookcase of around 1705, which it describes as one of the rarest and most exquisite pieces to have passed through its hands in 50 years of trading. Jeremy Ltd brings a brass Regency

skeleton clock by William Congreve conceived as a military trophy. Its base is decorated with a royal coat of arms and topped are mounted by the Prince of Wales feathers. Two other clocks by this maker remain in the Royal Collection. To all this, Galerie Perrin of Paris adds fine French furniture, and Grace Wu Bruce from Hong Kong classical Chinese furniture.

This year's fair also boasts its best-ever loan exhibition. "Grosvenor House Revisited" takes us back to the London home of the Dukes of Westminster, demolished in the 1920s and on whose site the five-star hotel was built. This was - and still is - one of the great private art collections of Britain. For this show, the present Duke lends an array of master-

trade fair, but the big dealers are still there in force. Some even exhibit, for example St James's Old Master dealer Rafael Valls, who also shows at Grosvenor House, textiles specialist Francesca Galloway, and Dutch icon dealers Jan Morsink. Some 40 per cent of exhibitors claim they sell to museums.

Olympia's vast exhibition halls are also the stage this year for the much enlarged Antiquarian Book Fair. With 149 exhibitors, it is now the largest international antiquarian book fair in Europe, embracing everything from illuminated manuscripts and early printed books to modern first editions, prints and photographs (June 4-7).

Appropriately for the Aubrey Beardsley centenary year, numerous exhibitors

bring fin-de-siècle material.

Dealer Barrie Marks, for instance, offers all three suppressed plates from Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (£16,500). Maggs Bros presents a striking ink and wash drawing "The Lady at the Dressing Table", signed with the Beardsley monogram (£25,000). And Simon Finch Rare Books Limited shows a two-page illustrated letter from Beardsley complete with self-caricatures, sketches and a poem (£16,000).

Olympia 2 also sees a new, fifth fair in the London June calendar, the HALL Antiques Carpet & Textile Art Fair (June 11-15). Organised under the auspices of HALL, the International Magazine of Antique Carpet & Textile Art, it is the first specialist international textile fair to be staged in a major city.

HALL editor Daniel Shaffer says: "There has been talk of such a fair in London for a long time, and it seemed that the time was right. London is the obvious venue as the long-established centre of the antique carpet and textile trade, and the last six to 12 months have seen a significant upturn in certain areas of this market."

He believes the fair will provide the best opportunity for seasoned collectors, enthusiasts and members of the wider public new to carpets and textiles to buy -

with confidence - good quality antique woven art.

The range of material offered by almost 50 exhibitors from more than a dozen countries is certainly impressive. Classical carpets come from such distinguished dealers as Peter Wilborg of Stockholm, Yves Mikaeloff of Paris and Michael Frances's The Textile Gallery of London. There are also strong selections of tribal textiles: Olive Loveless offers Kuba raffia skirts, for instance, Joss Graham an impressive late 19th century embroidered *riga*, or chief's robe, from north Nigeria, unusually woven from red silk unravelled from Italian textiles. The Ethno-Textil Gallery of Bremen presents Pre-Columbian textiles: Galerie Rug of Rashtat shows medieval textiles and embroideries. Far Eastern material will be in abundance.

Finally, there is another specialist fair, the long-established International Ceramics Fair & Seminar at the Park Lane Hotel (confusingly located on Piccadilly) from June 12-15. Now in its 17th year, the fair has expanded to embrace some 47 dealers who bring a wide range of pottery, porcelain and glass. Exhibits range from Chinese tomb figures to contemporary studio ceramics and glass by way of Dutch and English delfware, and 18th century porcelain from the great European manufactories.

This year's exhibits include some notable personalities. On Michael Gillingham's stand will be a Kangxi period biscuit porcelain figure of the drunken Tang poet Li Bai. Antiquitäten C. Bednarek from Vienna presents a rare Meissen figure by the great J. J. Kändler of Joseph Fröhlich Augustus the Strong's renowned court jester. Witness to more popular entertainment is Jonathan Horn's Staffordshire figure, believed to be of one Sergeant Major Philip Astley who found fame through a trick riding show.

For this year's loan show, the British Crafts Council stages a display of work which represents recent trends in British studio ceramics. Ceramicists include Alison Britton, Stephen Dixon, Philip Eglin, Walter Keeler and Magdalene Odundo. Some of their work will also be for sale on the Crafts Council's stand.

The London home of the Dukes of Westminster was - and still is - one of Britain's great private art collections

pieces, from Velazquez's portrait of the Infante Don Baltasar Carlos in the Riding School and Van Dyck's "Self-Portrait with a Sunflower" to two Claude landscapes, known as "Morning" and "Evening", and Stubbs's "Mares and Foals". Reason enough to visit Grosvenor House, Park Lane, from June 11-20.

Down the road, meanwhile, is the Fine Art & Antiques Fair at Olympia (June 4-14), celebrating its 25th year this summer. While Grosvenor House offers a refined showcase for some of the best art and antiques on offer in Britain, Olympia sets up stall as a bustling marketplace with over 400 exhibitors from the UK and overseas offering a phenomenal range of material. There is everything here from silver, furniture, paintings, textiles and antiques to musical instruments, kitchenalia and garden statuary, at prices from £100 to more than £100,000.

New exhibitors include Puridia Harbottle, who sells wine-related antiques, from silver stoppers to wine jugs and coolers, and the The Map House, which boasts possibly the world's largest collection of sea charts, maps and globes of regions terrestrial and celestial.

Long gone are the days when this was primarily a



A Queen Anne period walnut bureau bookcase, c. 1705, to be unveiled at the Grosvenor House Art & Antiques Fair

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SUMMER FESTIVALS

AIX-EN-PROVENCE

July 6 - 31
Service Réservation, Palais de l'ancien Archevêché, 13100 Aix-en-Provence, France. Tel +33-4-4217 3434 Fax +33-4-4263 1374. Website: <http://www.aix-en-provence.com/festartique/>

This summer marks the rebirth of the Aix festival after a period of artistic and financial degeneration. The new director, Stéphane Lissner, has put together a 50th anniversary programme which honours the past while looking to the future. The festival's Mozartian heritage is celebrated in a new Peter Brook production of *Don Giovanni*, conducted by Claudio Abbado. The future is heralded by the birth of an Académie européenne de musique, bringing together 100 younger-generation musicians for concerts, masterclasses and contemporary music workshops. The cream will take part in productions of Britten's *Curlew River* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. The other two productions have a dance bias: Pina Bausch will direct Bartók's *Bluebeard* (conducted by Boulez), and Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* can be seen in a touring production by Trisha Brown and William Christe.

ALDEBURGH

June 10 - 28
Aldeburgh Festival Box Office, High Street, Aldeburgh, Suffolk. IP15 5AX, England. Tel +44-1728-452715. Website: <http://www.aldeburgh.co.uk>

Aldeburgh means Benjamin Britten, the Suffolk coast and a quality English audience. This year's highlights include a staging of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, recitals by Peter Serkin and Ian Bostridge, and a new Peter Lieberman orchestral piece conducted by Oliver Knussen. David Sawer (b.1961) is the subject of this year's composer portrait, and Shamen Macdonald has written the text for a new Persophone opera by young Irish composer Deirdre Gribbin.

● **INTERMISSION**
Aldeburgh has somehow managed to keep the modern world at bay: the away-from-it-all location helps you to switch off. Fish, walking and Minster bird sanctuary are the main daytime attractions. You can buy Dover sole, crab and lobster straight off the beach, or eat fresh seafood at the Oysterage in the picturesque village of Orford (buy some of their smoked meat or fish to take home). The local fish-and-chips are just about the best in the country - it's part of the Aldeburgh experience to sit and eat them on the sea wall (weather permitting). The Lighthouse is the most popular restaurant with festival-goers: Cafe 152, small and informal, has more variety on the menu; the Regatta is handy if other places are full. The Mill, the Cross Keys and the White Hart offer acceptable pub food. Aldeburgh's three hotels book up fast: the Wentworth is family-owned and the White Lion has lots of character; both have an edge over the Brudenell. A seat in the room is a must; so is a car, if only to get to performances at the Snape Maltings.

AMSTERDAM

June 10 - 27
Holland Festival, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen, 1017 RP Amsterdam, Netherlands. Booking through ALB Ticketlines Tel +31-20-521 1211. Website: <http://www.usaall.nl/holland>

Compared with previous years, the 1998 Holland Festival is shorter, smaller and less oriented to traditional forms of music and opera. Drama outshines all other offerings. There are three Chelviow productions, including Peter Zadek's Vienna Burgtheater staging of

The Cherry Orchard; and two Shakespeare plays - Ivo van Hove's staging of *Romeo and Juliet*, and Julius Caesar directed by Italian enfant terrible Romeo Castellucci.

ASPEN

June 18 - August 16
Aspen Music Festival Ticket Sales, 2 Music School Road, Aspen, CO 81611, US. Tel +1-970-925 9042 Fax +1-970-925 8077. Website: <http://www.aspen.com/musicfestival>

The music school in this large Rockies resort attracts leading soloists to teach and play alongside 900 advanced students at a nine-week course of instruction. Within that period there are 150 public performances, many of them free. Weekend orchestral concerts take place in a 1,700-seat tent, chamber music events in a new 500-seat hall and opera in a small Victorian theatre. The 1998 festival includes the US stage premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Greek*, a John Adams residency and productions of *Falstaff* and Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*. Aspen may be a haunt of the idle rich, but the landscape is stunning and the atmosphere informal.

ATHENS

June-September
Athens Festival and Epidaurus Festival, 1 Voukourestiou Street, 10584 Athens, Greece. Tel +30-1-323 0048 Fax +30-1-323 5172. Website: <http://www.athensfestival.gr>

Although it has been shrinking in recent years, the Athens festival is still the biggest arts event in Greece, embracing concerts, ballet, opera, ancient drama and other performances, many inspired by Greek mythology and literature. The focus for events is the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, an amphitheatre dating from the 2nd century AD and situated beneath the Parthenon. There is a parallel series of weekend performances of Greek classical drama at Epidaurus (capacity 14,000); this is the best preserved of Greek amphitheatres and world renowned for its acoustics. In July there are weekend concerts at a small amphitheatre at Palaia Epidaurus, 90 minutes south-west of Athens on the coast: book through the Megaron (7282 333).

AVIGNON

July 10 - August 2
Service Réservation, BP 482, 84073 Avignon cedex, France. Tel +33-4-9014 1414 Fax +33-4-9014 1430. Website: <http://www.festival-avignon.com>

France's leading drama festival has an eye-catching oriental season at the centre of this year's programme, including an adaptation of *Macbeth* by Contemporary Legend Theatre of Taiwan. The programme also features a Russian production of Ostrovsky's *The Storm* and a Decian Donatelli staging of Camille's *Le Cid*.

BADEN-BADEN

August 16 - 25
Festspielhaus und Festspiele Baden-Baden GmbH, Beim alten Bahnhof 2, D-76530 Baden-Baden, Germany. Booking from 14ALL GmbH, Herdwegstrasse 15, D-70565 Stuttgart, Germany. Tel +49-711-7861 2990. Fax +49-711-7861 2990.

In an attempt to cash in on the expanding festival market, this genteel spa town in southern Germany has built a spanking new all-purpose theatre. Money appears to be no object - for funding authorities as much as for the wealthy clientele to whom the programme is targeted. Prestige events of one kind or another take place throughout the summer, but the focal point is the visit in August by Valery Gergiev with Kirov Opera productions of *The Queen of Spades* and *The Gambler*. The Festspielhaus meets no artistic need, but has a clear commercial



Charleston's emergence as a hot tourist city is helping the Spoleto Festival USA recreate its identity

Photo: Wade Speer MBR

rationale for Baden-Baden.

BAD KISSINGEN

June 18 - July 19
Kissinger Sommer, Postfach 2200, D-97672 Bad Kissingen, Germany. Tel +49-971-807110 Fax +49-971-807191.

Situated in north Bavaria, Bad Kissingen is a convenient holiday base for anyone wishing to explore an area rich in history, architecture and picturesque countryside. The town itself is a former royal spa. The 19th century Regentenbau incorporates four elegant concert halls, and there is a fine de-salé theatre. A starry line-up includes Murray Perahia playing Mozart, Waltraud Meier singing Wagner and Gidon Kremer doing his inimitable thing, plus orchestras from London, Dresden and Munich.

BAYREUTH

July 25 - August 28
Kartenbüro der Bayreuther Festspiele, Postfach 100262, D-95402 Bayreuth, Germany. Tel +49-921-78780.

The festival continues its steady decline, with little sign of new ideas or fresh talent. Wolfgang Wagner, the composer's 78-year old grandson, is clinging to power in the hope of bequeathing control to his wife and teenage daughter, while rival members of the family throw poisonous arrows from the wings. For the second year in a row, there are no new productions. Dieter Dorn's staging of *Der fliegende Holländer* returns with Cheryl Studer as Senta. Poul Elming and Linda Watson are the main protagonists in *Parasite*. Bayreuth conducts Mahler's *Das Lied von der Glocke* and John Tomlinson concludes his 10-year domination of *The Ring*.

● INTERMISSION

To have any chance of tickets at Bayreuth, you must get on the mailing list and return the booking form by mid-November for the following summer's festival. Unless you can pull strings, you'll have to wait a few years, patiently sending in your form every autumn, until your luck turns. Accommodation: the most astute Bayreuth regulars escape the pressure-cooker atmosphere of the festival by staying in the attractive nearby villages. Some hotels transport guests by luxury bus to the Festspielhaus, serve champagne and beer on the return journey, and lay on a gourmet supper at midnight. It's the only civilised way to digest *Götterdämmerung*.

BEAUNE

July 3 - August 1
Office de Tourisme, 21200 Beaune, France. Tel +33-3-8028 2130 Fax +33-3-8028 2138. Website: <http://www.beaune.com>

This Burgundian town is famous for its 17th century architecture, its superb Burgundian cuisine, and its annual festival of the Holy Spirit. The festival is a celebration of the town's history and its Burgundian heritage. It features a variety of events, including concerts, dance performances, and theatrical productions. The festival is held in the town's main square, which is surrounded by historic buildings. The atmosphere is festive and the events are of high quality.

saving a reputation for high-powered weekends of baroque music, performed by the cream of Europe's period ensembles in the open-air setting of the Cour des Hospices. This year's highlight is a concert performance of Zoroaster's five-act *tragédie lyrique*, by Les Arts Florissants under William Christie on July 11. Other notable events include Handel's *Solomon* starring Andreas Scholl, and an evening of motets conducted by Marc Minkowski.

● INTERMISSION

It's hard to know who's kidding whom when the operators bill this as "one of the most prestigious musical events this century". Like *Aida* on the banks of the Nile, a staging of Puccini's *Turandot* in the walled gardens of the Forbidden City may be a big tourist event, but its artistic value is doubtful. If it's *Turandot* you want, you'll get it cheaper and more authentically in Italy or your local theatre. If you want to see China, there are more imaginative ways of going about it.

BREMEN

July 16 - August 20
Kartenbüro der Bremer Festspiele, Postfach 311, A-6901 Bremen, Austria. Tel +43-5574-4076 Fax +43-5574-407400. Website: <http://www.bremersfestspiele.com>

Despite an outdoor floating stage (capacity 6,000), Bremen has established a reputation for adventurousness that no other festival competing for the mass market has matched. Visually striking, non-traditional productions are the hallmark of the intendant, Alfred Wopmann, who attracts leading directors to work on the sort of shows they would not be found doing elsewhere. Götz Friedrich's spectacular production of *Porgy and Bess* is revived on the floating stage, while Montemazz's *L'armoire à treize usages* is Wopmann's choice of neglected opera for an indoor staging in the Festspielhaus.

● INTERMISSION

The Vorspiel, Bremen's sonic hinterland, is the perfect antidote to the traffic and tourist hordes in the town. Drive up into the hills of the Bregezerwald and catch a glimpse of unspoiled village life at the Gasthof Hirschen (tel +43-5512-29440) is recommended, particularly for visitors. Dress down for festival performances, and don't make the mistake of trying to park at the overcrowded Festspielhaus complex. Leave the car opposite the station on the landward side of the railway, and use the covered bridge. Beware of early-evening thunderstorms, and always take an umbrella and raincoat to performances.

● INTERMISSION

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CHARLESTON

May 22 - June 7
Spoleto Festival USA, PO Box 704, Charleston, South Carolina 29402, US. Tel +1-803-723 0402 Fax +1-803-720 1121. Website: <http://www.charleston.net/spoleto>

For its first 17 years, Charleston acted as the US branch of the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto - presided over by the same chaotic genius, Gian Carlo Menotti. By the early 1990s, the board was fed up with Menotti's prejudices and threats, and accepted his resignation. The

"civil war", as it is dubbed locally, is now history, but Menotti's shadow still falls over the festival, which is trying to recreate its identity. Charleston's emergence as a hot tourist city has helped: between performances it is easy to lose oneself walking streets full of 17th, 18th and 19th century houses. The 1998 programme includes *Janus* conducted by Steven Sloane, and a David Alden production of Cavalli's *Glisnes*.

CHELTENHAM

July 5 - 20
Booking Office, Town Hall, Imperial Square, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 1QA, England. Tel +44-1242-227973 Fax +44-1242-573902. Website: <http://www.cheltenhamfestival.co.uk>

Set in one of Britain's most attractive Regency towns, this festival has been revitalised by composer-director Michael Berkeley. The 1998 programme includes a Beethoven piano concerto cycle with Alfred Brendel, a staging of Britten's *Punch and Judy*, premieres by Nigel Osborne and Jonathan Lloyd, and the complete chamber and piano music of Janáček.

DROTTHINGHOLM

June 26 - September 1
Drottningholm Slottsteater, Box 27050, S-10251 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel +46-8-660 8225 Fax +46-8-665 1473. Website: <http://www.drottningholmsteater.se>

Thanks to its peaceful surroundings and beautifully preserved 18th century court theatre, Drottningholm offers a unique opera-going experience. Since he took over as artistic director last year, Per-Erik Ohm has brought a welcome thematic link to the programme - focusing this summer on Gluck, whose works played an important part in Drottningholm's Gustavian heyday. Arnold Osmann will conduct stagings of the three reform operas - *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Alceste* and *Paride ed Elena* - together with the ballet *Don Juan*. The only drawback with Drottningholm is that, due to the way productions are spaced over the summer, you can rarely see more than one show on the same visit.

● INTERMISSION

The best way to reach Drottningholm is by steamer from Stockholm's harbour (leaving on the hour, every hour: tel 233378). The 50-minute journey is an ideal moment to relax and enjoy the view of the archipelago of islands and inlets. Rather than rush through a meal on the boat, book a table at Wälschhus, Drottningholm's upmarket restaurant (759 0308), or simply turn up at the informal park restaurant. Try to make time for a pre-dinner stroll through the palatial gardens.

EDINBURGH

August 16 - September 5
Edinburgh International Festival, 21 Market Street, Edinburgh EH1 1BW, Scotland. Tel +44-131-473 2000 Fax +44-131-473 2003. Website: <http://www.go-edinburgh.co.uk>

Edinburgh is the festival city par excellence - and Brian McMaster's 1998 programme will take some beating. At its heart is a Schiller and Verdi tie-up, embracing four plays and their corresponding operas. The programme is flexible, but the idea is that you catch a play in the afternoon and the corresponding opera in the evening. Two of the operas are being staged (*Don Carlos* and *Il masnadiero*), but only one of the plays. The rest will receive concert performances

and rehearsed readings. You can hear Berglund conduct the Chamber Orchestra of Europe in a Sibelius cycle, the Berlin Philharmonic in Beethoven's Ninth (top price only £35), a Boulez world premiere and recitals by Brendel, Bostridge and Bryn Terfel; plus the complete songs of Hugo Wolf. The final week of the festival is dominated by the music of Smetana, including a new Scottish Opera staging of *Delbor*. Alongside Schiller, there is an international theatre season featuring Luc Bondy's *Lausanna* staging of Racine's *Phèdre*, the new Boito Strauss play directed by Peter Stein, Calderon directed by Calisto Tanzi and a UK debut for Dutch director Ivo van Hove. The dance programme celebrates the work of Hans van Manen.

FELDKIRCH

June 17 - 28
Schubertide GmbH, Villa Rosenthal, Schweizer Strasse 1, Postfach 100, A-6845 Hohenems, Austria. Tel +43-5576-72061 Fax +43-5576-75450.

The world's leading Schubertide has never been quite the same since it moved from intimate Hohenems to the grander setting of Feldkirch. Nonetheless, the quality of artists has remained high, and the recital halls are as handsome as the wooded scenery of western Austria. The 1998 line-up includes Bär, Bertoli, Brendel, Terfel, Holzman and the Philharmonia Orchestra, which gives a Schumann cycle under Harmoncourt.

GARSINGTON

June 8 - July 5
Garsington Opera, Garsington, Oxford, OX44 9DH, England. Tel +44-1865-361636 Fax +44-1865-361645.

There are two types of opera at Garsington. The first is the annual soap opera involving a handful of local objects who, on the first night of last year's festival, switched on their lawnmowers to counteract the "noise" generated by performances. Only when you have been to this otherwise peaceful Oxfordshire village do you realise there is a much more entertaining spectacle inside the grounds of Leonard Ingram's 17th century manor house. The stage is a garden terrace, protected from the elements by a sophisticated canopy. Repertoire favours the unusual, with a safe box-office bet thrown in to ensure audiences and financial survival. This year: Mozart's *Lucio Silla* with Thomas Randle in the title role, Rossini's *La pietra del paragone* with Charles Workman as Glorcondo, and *Falstaff* - Garsington's first Verdi.

● INTERMISSION

The manor setting, with secluded Italianate gardens laid out by Lady Ottoline Morrell in the 1920s, is ideal for picnicking. There is plenty of room, but try to arrive at least an hour before the performance if you want a good spot by the lake. Alternatively, the Great Barn offers an excellent interval dinner (tel +44-1865-684251). If you don't want to drink and drive, stay at one of the approved inns nearby or in Oxford, barely five miles away, and take a taxi. Evening dress is "suggested" - is obligatory.

GLIMMERGLASS

July 2 - August 22
Glimmerglass Opera Ticket Office, 18 Chestnut Street, Cooperstown, NY 13326, US. Tel +1-807-547 2255 Fax +1-807-547 1257.

Set amid the rolling scenery of upstate New York, Glimmerglass is a relaxing weekend or holiday destination for opera-lovers,

with a 900-seat theatre surrounded by sun-baked lawns. Don't be misled by the much-touted comparison with Glyndebourne - Glimmerglass's standards are not quite on that scale, and the atmosphere is more egalitarian. The pick of this year's repertoire should be *Tosca*, directed by Mark Lamos, and *Partenope* (with David Daniels and Lisa Saffer, conducted by Harry Bicket). There is also a new *Falstaff* and a rare outing for Virgil Thomson's *The Mother of Us All*.

● INTERMISSION

The placid waters of Lake Otsego, a stone's throw from the theatre, are an ideal backdrop for dinner at the Blue Mingo Grill (tel 547 2543), where you can eat bass and swordfish on the lakeside terrace. This is the best option when you have been to an afternoon show. If you're going to an evening performance, book a gourmet picnic at the theatre for consumption before or after (547 2255), or try Gabriella on the Square, the new upmarket restaurant in Cooperstown (547 8000). There are also three excellent restaurants 20 minutes away in Cherry Valley. Stay at the Otsego Hotel (547 9931), where casual visitors can enjoy a good help-yourself lunch on the lake terrace, or try any of the homely bed-and-breakfast places recommended by the Glimmerglass accommodation office (547 2255). Avoid Glimmerglass on Baseball Hall of Fame weekend (July 23-27). Festival-hoppers should note that Glimmerglass is a short drive over the state border from Tanglewood.

GLYNDEBOURNE

May 21 - August 28
Glyndebourne Festival Opera Box Office, P.O. Box 2624, Lewes, East Sussex BN9 5UW, England. Tel +44-1273-613813 Fax +44-1273-614886. Website: <http://www.glyndebourne.com>

This could be a vintage year for Glyndebourne. There are some eager young voices in Graham Vick's new production of *Don Juan*, and the dynamic Yakov Kreizberg returns to conduct a revival of Nikolaus Lehnhoff's acclaimed staging of *Kaya Kabanova*. In Handel's *Rodelinda*, William Christie and Jean-Marie Villégier will be hoping to echo the legendary success of their 1980s partnership in *Ayie* in Paris; star countertenor Andreas Scholl should be worth the ticket alone. Having patched up his differences with the festival, Peter Hall returns to direct *Simon Boccanegra*: it is Hall's second year at Verdi's Genoese opera at Glyndebourne, having staged it with mixed success in 1995. *Le Corbeau* is revived from last year, and John Cox's classic staging of *Capriccio* is wheeled out as a vehicle for Kiri Kanawa and Felicity Lott.

● INTERMISSION

While cabinet ministers and captains of industry can still be espied in the audience, and standards of dress remain high, Glyndebourne has - since the advent of the new theatre - become more democratic, if not plebeian. Picnicking is pretty crammed, but it's a lot cheaper than the overpriced bars and restaurants. If you want to eat at one of the three restaurants - and it can be chilly on the lawn in May and early June - book in advance (01273-612510). The Nether Wallop probably represents best value; Pro Leth serves lighter meals in the Midway. If you're looking for overnight accommodation, the Hosted Place and Ashdown Park

hotels represent the more expensive end of the market. Many prefer to bed-and-breakfast in the countryside - the Glyndebourne information office has a list of approved places. Don't stay in Lewes.

GRANADA

June 19 - July 5
Festival Internacional de Granada, Apart. Correos 64, 18060 Granada, Spain. Tel +34-958-276 200 Fax +34-958-286 888.

Granada marks the centenary of the birth of Garcia Lorca by programming music and dance inspired by his writings. There is also a Gershwin tribute and a visit from the Lahti Symphony Orchestra under Osmo Vänskä. For foreign visitors, Granada's most distinctive events are the concerts of vocal and religious music in the Cathedral and other historic churches.

GSTAAD

July 17 - September 5
Musiksommer Gstaad Saanenland, Chalet Rialto, Postfach 334, CH-3780 Gstaad, Switzerland. Tel +41-33-748 8333 Fax +41-33-748 8350. Website: <http://www.gstaad.ch/musos>

The arrival of Gidon Kremer as artistic director has invigorated this well-heeled Alpine festival. Much of the programme is "Kremer and friends", but the popular side of the festival remains in the hands of Menuhin, the Camerata Lysy and the Zurich Chamber Orchestra.

INNSBRUCK

August 16 - 29
Innsbruck-Information, Burggraben 3, A-6020 Innsbruck, Austria. Tel +43-512-581581 Fax +43-512-535614. Website: <http://theater.com/innsbruck>

The historic castles and churches of the Austrian Tyrol provide the perfect context for this early music festival, which aims to revive Innsbruck's pre-Baroque traditions of opera and ballet. This year's centrepiece is Handel's *Semele* conducted by René Jacobs and staged by Karl-Ernst Ursel Hemmann.

KUHMHO

July 19 - August 2
Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, Toddistu 38, 68900 Kuhmo, Finland. Tel +358-9-652 0936 Fax +358-9-652 0961. Website: <http://www.kuhmofestival.fi>

This is one of those exceptional festivals where setting and artistic climate combine to create an experience few visitors will forget. There is chamber music from mid-morning to late evening, all centred around Kuhmo's unique lakeside concert hall. Every summer, founder-director Seppo Kananen draws together an eclectic mix of artists from around the world. But it is the music that counts at Kuhmo, not the star appeal of the soloists, and somehow the Kuhmo music always confounds your expectations. This year's programme includes large doses of Haydn and Villa-Lobos, French music from Chausson to Florent Schmitt, and some new works by Finnish composers - not forgetting morning concerts by the young Virtuosi di Kuhmo in the wooden church.

● INTERMISSION

In summer, Kuhmo resembles an outpost of paradise. It has just one main street, and you can swim in the lakes - perfect if you are invited to a private sauna party. Have a pullover ready for the evenings. Don't expect cosmopolitan food or atmosphere (but there is a bank). For comfort, stay at the Kalevala Hotel, but you'll need transport every time you go in and out of town. For convenience and simplicity, the Kainuu Hotel is the best option - it stands just around the corner from all three festival venues, allowing you to nip in and out between events. Or ask the festival office for details of private rented accommodation. The market at the central crossroads has interesting crafts and clothing; be prepared to haggle politely if there's something expensive you really want. You can get a nice salad lunch at the Arni cafe, and the cafe at the lakeside concert hall invites relaxation between events. Above all, book for more concerts than you think you'll want to attend. Go for the unfamiliar rather than the tried and tested - Kuhmo is full of pleasant surprises. One final tip: the ideal festival holiday in Finland combines Savonlinna and Kuhmo, but make sure you do them in that order. After Kuhmo, anything is a come-down. When you arrive at Helsinki airport, or before you fly back home, try to visit Sibelius's house, Ainola, less than 30 minutes away.

Verona

the Place... the Music... the Event

for details of this
season's programme
and to book call

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SUMMER FESTIVALS

LINZ

September 13 - October 5
Brucknerhaus-Kasse, Untere
Donaustraße 7, Postfach 57,
A-4010 Linz, Austria.
Tel +43-732-775230
Fax +43-732-761 2201.

This late summer festival is
built around the music of
Bruckner, set against the
countryside which the
composer knew and loved
best. This year's conductors
include Roger Norrington,
Colin Davis and Herbert
Blomstedt, and there will be a
Wagner concert with
Hildegard Behrens.

LONDON

City of London Festival
June 23 - July 16
Box Office, Barbican Centre,
Silk Street, London EC2Y
8DS, England. Tel
+44-171-693 9891.

Three weeks of concerts
offer a chance to discover the
magnificent churches, ivy
halls and open spaces of
London's Square Mile. The
festival opens with a candlelit
Rachmaninov Vespers at St
Paul's Cathedral, which is also
the venue for a John Eliot
Gardiner performance of
Verdi's Requiem. Other
highlights: saxophonist John
Harle in recital with Richard
Rodney Bennett, Evelyn
Glennie in collaboration with
artist Norman Perryman, Olga
Borodina as Carmen with the
LSO and Colin Davis, and a
concert dramatisation of
Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

BBC Proms

July 17 - September 12
BBC Proms Ticket Shop,
Royal Albert Hall, London
SW7 2AP, England.
Tel +44-171-599 8212
Fax +44-171-594 1406.

Arguably the biggest and
best of the world's music
festivals, with 73 concerts by
a galaxy of international
artists. Among this year's
headlines are BBC
commissions from Michael
Berkeley and John Harle,
European premieres for
Birtwistle's *Exodus* and Tan
Dun's *Symphony 1997*. Proms
debuts for Szymanowski's
King Roger and the Elgar/
Payne "Third Symphony",
visits by the Chicago
Symphony and Los Angeles
Philharmonic, and centenary
tributes to Gershwin and
Eisler. Thomas Hampson is
the first American to sing *Rule
Britannia* at the Last Night.

LUCERNE

August 16 - September 10
Internationale
Musikfestwochen Luzern,
Postfach, CH-6002 Lucerne,
Switzerland. Tel +41-41-210
3080 Fax +41-41-210 9464.
Website: <http://www.lucerne-music.ch/>

Switzerland's premier
festival celebrates its 50th
anniversary with the opening
of a new concert hall
designed by Jean Nouvel and
Russell Johnson. This year's
programme, a "Festival of
Festivals", brings performers
hot-foot from Bayreuth,
Salzburg, the Montreux Jazz
Festival and London Proms.
Most of Europe's great
orchestras - including the
Berlin, Vienna and St
Petersburg Philharmonics -
will be present, and recitalists

include Pollini, Mutter,
Barenboim and Bartoli. Heinz
Hollerger is composer in
residence. Lucerne is also
inaugurating a high-calibre
piano festival (November
19-22), with Perahia and
Brendel.

INTERMISSION

Sample Swiss hospitality at its
luxurious best at the lakeside
Palace Hotel. A less expensive
alternative would be the
Montana, with its newly
restored fin-de-siècle decor
and spectacular westward
panorama. Of the smaller
hotels, the Hofgarten is the
most recommendable, not
least for its vegetarian cuisine.
For lunch, try the St Niklausen
hotel - only 10 minutes from
Lucerne, but worlds away
from the hubbub of the city.
Festive special (Eggs Benedict)
is the local speciality, and the
lakeside terrace enjoys
breathtaking views. In town,
the most interesting places to
eat are the Rebstock and the
Wilden Mann, but book in
advance to be sure of a table.
The Walliser Kanne makes a
speciality of traditional Swiss
fondue. Don't miss the
Transport Museum, the small
Fleissli Museum and the
Wagner house at Tribschen.
Recommended excursion: the
combined steamer/rail trip up
Pilatus or Rigi, the two
nearest mountains.

MATSUMOTO

August 18 - September 13
Saito Kinen, 3-7
Marunouchi, Matsumoto-shi
Nagano, Japan 390-0065.
Tel +81-263-390001
Fax +81-263-390440.

Saito Kinen translates as
"memorial to Saito" - the
influential Hiroo Saito
(1902-74), who taught Seiji
Ozawa and many other
leading Japanese musicians.
The festival draws top-class
players every summer to a
city surrounded by hot
springs, paddy-fields and the
gentle foothills of the
Japanese Alps. Matsumoto
(pop.200,000) is isolated from
the musical politics of
orchestra-saturated Tokyo,
but only a three-hour train ride
from the capital. In addition to
the main orchestral concerts
and smaller-scale events,
opera has become a regular
feature: Poulenc's *Dialogues
des Carmélites* is this year's
chance, staged by Francesca
Zambello and conducted by
Ozawa. The cast includes
Patricia Racette, Josephine
Barstow and Felicity Palmer.
This is Japan's top musical
event, heavily oversubscribed
despite high ticket prices.

MONTREUX-VEVEY

August 29 - September 17
Festival International de
Musique et d'Art Lyrique,
Rue du Théâtre 5, Case
Postale 182, CH-1820
Montreux 2, Switzerland.
Tel +41-21-866 8025
Fax +41-21-863 2505.
Website: <http://www.montreux.ch>

This sophisticated resort on Lake
Geneva prides itself on a
festival of expensive imports.
Visiting ensembles include the
Royal Concertgebouw with
Chailly, the Leipzig
Gewandhaus Orchestra with
Blomstedt and the Chamber

Orchestra of Europe with
Harnoncourt. There is an
attractive baroque series, a
cycle of recitals featuring
Bonney, Goerne and others,
and the Glyndebourne
Rodelinda in concert.

MUNICH

June 30 - July 31
Festspielhaus der
Bayerischen Staatsoper,
Postfach 101404, D-80088
Munich, Germany.
Tel +49-89-2185 1820
Fax +49-89-2185 1903.
Website: <http://www.staatsoper.bayern.de/staatsoper>

The Bavarian State Opera's
1998 festival opens with a
new staging of *Tristan und
Isolde* by controversial
producer Peter Konwitschny,
starring Siegfried Jerusalem
and Waltraud Meier. Wolfgang
Sawallisch returns to conduct
a Wagner and Mendelssohn
concert, and the Wooster
Group of New York perform
Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy
Ape*. The rest of the
programme consists of repeat
performances of the past
season's repertoire - with a
heavy mark-up on seat prices.

NEW YORK

July 7 - 26
Lincoln Center Festival,
Avery Fisher Hall Box Office,
10 Lincoln Center Plaza,
New York, NY 10023-6972,
US. Tel +1-212-721 6500
Fax +1-212-875 5027.
Website: <http://www.lincolncenter.org>

A big question-mark hangs
over the future of this festival:
founder-director John
Rockwell has left, perhaps
sensing that the event, now in
its third year, may be bound
for the chop. For those stuck
in New York in midsummer,
there's a weekend Kunju
opera marathon with inclusive
Chinese buffet, a staging of
Hildegard von Bingen's *Ordo
Virginitatis*, a Bernstein
retrospective, John Cranico's
Romeo and Juliet, and
Nicholas Hytner's production
of *Twelfth Night*.

ORKNEY

June 19 - 24
St Magnus Festival, Tourist
Information Centre, Kirkwall,
Orkney KW15 1DE,
Scotland.
Tel +44-1856-872669
Fax +44-1856-871170.

This is one of the world's
least cosmopolitan festivals -
and one of the most
individual. The Orkney Islands,
north of the Scottish
mainland, provide a
memorable setting at a time
of year when days are long
and nights short. The
programme includes concerts
by the BBC Scottish
Symphony Orchestra, a recital
by Finnish fiddle virtuoso
Peeka Kuusisto, a musical
excursion by sea to Hoy and
an exhibition of Alan Davie's
paintings. Stromness Hotel is
offering an accommodation
package of seven nights' bed
and breakfast for £199.

PERALADA

July 18 - August 20
Festival de Musica Castell
de Peralada, Pere de
Montcada 1, 08094
Barcelona, Spain.
Tel +34-9-3-280 5886



Rachin's Phedra, part of an international theatre season in Edinburgh

Photo: Lawrence Mullenders

Fax +34-3-203 5700.
Website: <http://www.festivalperalada.com>

The Catalan town of
Peralada, 14 miles from the
French border, has a medieval
castle, church and cloister, in
the gardens of which the
festival takes place. There are
concerts by the Israel and
Dresden Philharmonics, a
performance of *Porphy and
Bess* with Simon Estes and
Cynthia Clay, Scottish
Ballet's *La Sylphide*, Roland
Petit's new *Swan Lake*, and a
recital by Alfredo Kraus.

PESARO

August 8 - 22
Bigliottaria del Festival, Via
Rossini 37, 61100 Pesaro,
Italy. Tel +39-721-33184
Fax +39-721-30978.
Website: <http://www.rossinioperafestival.it>

Pesaro means
Mediterranean sun, Adriatic
sand and Rossinian vitality.
Set in the composer's
birthplace, the festival is the
ideal way to combine a
holiday in Italy with
high-quality opera. This
summer's programme
includes Rossini's three-tenor
Otello (Bruce Ford, Paul
Austin Kelly, Charles
Workman), a Ronconi
production of *La Cenerentola*

(never performed at the
festival) and the premiere of a
rock opera by Azio Corghi,
based on the story of
L'italiano in Algeri. Plus a
biennial music-and-verse
celebration of Italian poet
Giacomo Leopardi.

INTERMISSION

Fish is the dish to go for in
Pesaro. Try Il Castiglione: it's
quiet, not too expensive and
the surroundings (a gravelled
garden off a street parallel to
the seashore) are charming.
Most important of all, it stays
open after performances -
make sure you book a table
on your way to the theatre. An
alternative is the less romantic
Da Carlo. In both cases, you
can rely on the staff's
recommendation for what's
fresh on the day. For lunch,
it's worth driving up into the
hills above Pesaro, where you
can eat at any number of
uncrowded little restaurants
away from the seaside buzz.
For the more adventurous, a
visit to Gradara, about an
hour away, makes a pleasant
excursion.

PRADES

July 28 - August 13
Bureau du festival Pablo
Casals, BP 24, rue Victor
Hugo, 66502 Prades cedex

02, France. Tel +33-4-6896
3307 Fax +33-4-6896 5095.
Named after the famous
Spanish cellist, the Casals
chamber music festival is a
useful adjunct to a holiday in
south-western France. The
1998 programme includes
copious quantities of
Beethoven, played by
musicians of the calibre of
Leonidas Kavakos, Boris
Berezovsky, Maurice Bourges
and the Chilingirian Quartet.

RAVENNA

June 15 - July 26
Ravenna Festival, Via Dante
Alighieri 1, 48100 Ravenna,
Italy. Tel +39-544-213995
Fax +39-544-36303. Website:
<http://www.netgate.it/ra/festival>

Riccardo Muti lives in
Ravenna, and his festival is run
by his wife. He conducts the
Vienna Philharmonic in
Schubert and Bruckner, and
presides over a staging of
Pagliacci with Alagna and
Gergely. The Teatro Alighieri
and other festival venues are
architectural jewels, worth
visiting whoever is playing.

RAVINIA

June 14 - September 5
Ravinia Festival, PO Box
896, Highland Park, Illinois
60035, US. Tel +1-847-266

5100 Fax +1-847-266 0641.
Website: <http://www.ravinia.org>

Ravinia, set in the wooded
landscape of Highland Park, is
the Chicago Symphony's
summer home. Orchestral
concerts take place in the
Pavilion, chamber music
recitals in the Martin Theatre.
The artistic director is
Christoph Eschenbach, who
conducts performances
featuring Dmitri Hvorostovsky
(July 11), Renée Fleming
(August 8) and Bryn Terfel
(August 18). The line-up also
includes Yo-Yo Ma, Joshua
Bell, Susan Graham, Leif Ove
Andsnes, the Joffrey Ballet,
Manhattan Transfer and the
Carnegie Hall Jazz Band.

RHEINBERG

July 3 - August 15
Kammeroper Schloss
Rheinberg, Kavaliershaus,
D-16831 Rheinberg,
Germany.
Tel +49-33631-38049
Fax +49-33631 39707.

The festival in this attractive
town, north of Berlin, is run
by German composer Siegfried
Matthus. It draws its character
from young performers and a
setting next to lake and
castle. The 1998 programme
includes a rare staging of *The
Letters of Van Gogh* by
Russian composer Grigory
Frid (b.1915).

SAINT LOUIS

May 23 - June 27
Opera Theatre of Saint
Louis, P.O.Box 191910, Saint
Louis, Missouri 63119-7910,
US. Tel +1-314-961 0544
Fax +1-314-961 0612.
Website: <http://www.opera-stl.org>

The Lovett-Hilton Center,
on the campus of Webster
University, is the setting for
one of the world's most
pleasurable opera festivals.
presided over by veteran
British stage director Colin
Graham. This year sees the
US premiere of Alexander
Goehr's *Ariane*, Katya
Kabanova directed by JoAnne
Alkalitis, *Faust* with spoken
dialogue, and *Don Pasquale*.
A haven of sensible
English-language
performance, Saint Louis is
renowned for discovering
young American singers who
go on to make big careers.

INTERMISSION

Hotels: stay at the Ritz or the
less grand but more intimate
Daniele, both in Clayton; in
the city centre, the best
option would be the Hyatt
Regency. Sight: the
well-stocked Art Museum; the
magnificent Union Station
railhead, offering a glimpse of
Saint Louis' former role as a
gateway to the west; a
day-trip up the Illinois side of
the Mississippi river to Elsie,
where you get spectacular
views westwards. Eating:
book a picnic the day before,
for pre-performance
consumption on the shady
lawn adjoining the theatre.

ST PETERSBURG

June 19 - 29
White Nights, c/o Friends of
the Kirov, 95 Aldwych,
London WC2B 4JF, England.
Tel +44-171-631 7547 Fax
+44-171-631 8209. Maryinsky
Theatre, St Petersburg:

Tel +7-812-114 3039
Fax +7-812-314 1744.

The Kirov Opera's White
Nights festival, founded and
masterminded by Valery
Gergiev, takes place at a time
of year when St Petersburg is
at its most irresistible. This
year's programme includes
Prince Igor, *Mazepa*, *Der
fliegende Holländer* and a
Domingo/Wagner gala, all
conducted by Gergiev, plus a
generous supply of concerts
and ballet performances. It is
an ideal chance to sample a
broader artistic picture of the
Kirov than can be glimpsed
from any particular tour. Bear
in mind that this is a company
famous for last-minute
planning: events can change
at the eleventh hour. For the
most part, tickets are a
relative bargain even at the
higher rates charged for
foreigners, but hotel rooms
can be hard to find. On July
7, the Kirov is scheduled to
offer its fourth and final new
production of the season - *La
forza del destino* in the original
St Petersburg version of 1882.

SALZBURG

July 24 - August 30
Karlshof der Salzburger
Festspiele, Postfach 140,
A-5010 Salzburg, Austria.
Tel +43-662-844601
Fax +43-662-846682.
Website: <http://www.salzbg-fest.co.at/salzbg-fest/>

Mixed blessings this year.
There are new productions of
Mahagonny (with Catherine
Malfitano and Gwyneth
Jones), *Katya Kabanova* with
the Czech Philharmonic in
the pit, and Don Carlos (Mazzei/
Wernicke). Mussolini's *Saint
François* is revived for those
patient enough to sit it out,
and there is an entertaining
but flawed *Entführung*. All
of these may well be upstaged
by concert performances of
Parsifal (Gergiev) and
Szymanowski's *King Roger*
(Rattle). Plus the world
premiere of Hal Hartley's
"musical play", a Rattle
Beethoven cycle, a Rattle
German-language *Tristan and
Isolde* and Robert Lepage's
Geometry of Miracles.

INTERMISSION

Salzburg's unimpressive
hotels represent poor value for
money, especially at festival
prices. It's best to stay
out-of-town. If you're too late
to book rooms at Schloss
Fuschl (tel +43-6223-2283 fax
+43-6223-225 3531), at least
try to eat there: the cuisine is
on a level to match its
upmarket hotel
accommodation, and the
setting in the hills above
Salzburg is the perfect
antidote to the tourist throng
of the city. A more modest
option would be the
Hubertushof in Arnf
(+43-8246-9970) - one of
several comfortable inns
within easy driving distance of
the Festspielhaus area. For
supper, try the Pfefferstichl
(+43-662-861242) and
Friedenburg (830815); the
garden restaurant at the latter
is also good for lunch. The
Mortier era has given the
festival a go-as-you-please
atmosphere, so don't feel you
have to dress up for evening
performances.

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MILICENT MARTIN, JUDIA MCKENZIE, MARION
MONTGOMERY, PAUL NICHOLAS, ELAINE PAIGE,
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SUMMER FESTIVALS

SANTA FE

July 3 - August 29
Santa Fe Opera, P.O. Box 2408, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-2408, US.
Tel +1-505-886 5900
Fax +1-505-886 5999
Website: <http://www.santafeopera.org>

Santa Fe's appeal lies in its exotic setting and well-balanced repertoire. Much of the interest this summer centres on the new theatre - covered for the first time in the festival's 42-year history but still with open sides to allow views of mountain sunsets. Top of the bill is a new Tim Albery/Anthony McDonald production of *Baroque* (in English) starring Susan Graham. Repertory also includes *Salome*, *Madame Butterfly*, Jonathan Miller's *Magic Flute* and the US premiere of Ingvar Lidholm's Strindberg opera *A Dream Play*, with Sylvia McNair and Heide Hagedorn.

INTERMISSION

Santa Fe (altitude 7,000 ft) is hot, picturesque, touristy and easy to walk about in. Its appeal lies in the climate, the adobe architecture, the mix of cultures and the traces of ancient civilisation in the surrounding hills. If you're a first-time visitor, it's best to stay in town: try La Posada, the Inn of the Governors or the Inn of the Anasazi. The theatre is six miles outside: if you take your car, it can be slow getting out at the end; the shuttle bus is cheap and almost as convenient. With performances beginning at sunset, it's best to eat in town beforehand. If you want more than beans and tostadas, try the Casa Santa, the Palace, Santacasa, the Old House (at Eldorado Hotel) or Jack's. There are also some Asian and sushi houses. Dress: whatever's comfortable, but remember that on the rare occasions when it rains, it's torrential. Souvenirs: weavings, Pueblo pottery. Places worth a visit: the Abiqui area where Georgia O'Keeffe painted, the revered Spanish church at Chimayo, Pueblo Village and the Indian art museum, none of which is large enough to be tedious.

SANTANDER

August 1 - 31
Festival Internacional de Santander, C/Gamazo, 36004 Santander, Spain.
Tel +34-42-210505

Fax +34-42-314767. Website: <http://www.festival-int-santander.org>
Santander lacks artistic identity, but always persuades a handful of high-powered musicians to drop in for a night or two. This year: Alagna and Georgiou, Roland Petit's Ballet National de Marseille, the Israel Philharmonic and a well-cast Don Carlo.

SAVONLINNA

July 4 - August 2
Savonlinna Opera Festival, Oulunkatu 35, 57130 Savonlinna, Finland.
Tel +358-15-476750
Fax +358-15-476 7540
Website: <http://www.operafestival.fi>

No one who visits Finland's premier festival can fail to be impressed by the stone castle in which it takes place. Poised on the edge of a lake, Olaf's Castle (Olavinlinna) is one of the world's outstanding outdoor locations for opera: its open courtyard lends a mystique to performances - partly because of its ancient aura, partly because of its rich acoustics. This year's attractions include a new production of *La forza del destino*, revivals of *Tannhäuser* and *Cav and Pag*, and the Royal Opera in Peter Grimes and Verdi's *Il masnadieri*.

INTERMISSION

Despite its international reputation, Savonlinna is not a place where you can live grandly. Accommodation and cuisine are very ordinary, but don't let that put you off. Days are long and nights are light, and half the populace seems to be walking around at 3 in the morning. The local fish delicacy is vendace; the asmon is also good. Just before you cross the footbridge to the castle, turn and look back along Limankatu, and you'll see what Savonlinna looked like 80 years ago, with dust road and wooden houses. If you leave enough time before the performance, you can eat in one of these buildings - the Krouvi restaurant. There are also some attractive craft shops on the same street, which you can visit after the performance. The Retretti Art Centre puts on two exhibitions every summer - one of a major international figure, the other of Finnish artists. The Forest Museum at Lusto is also worth a visit. You can go to Retretti by steamer, but it



Götz Friedrich's spectacular production of *Porgy and Bess* is revived on the floating stage at Bregenz.

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

July 10 - August 30
Kartenzentrale des Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festivals, Postfach 3840, D-24037 Kiel, Germany.
Tel +49-431-567080
Fax +49-431-567082

Outside the opening and closing concerts, and three evenings of Beethoven violin sonatas with Anne-Sophie Mutter, this year looks decidedly low-key, with scores of Italian instrumental music. Concerts by the festival orchestra rarely disappoint, and much of the festival's appeal lies in its venues, spread across the charming north German countryside.

SEATTLE

August 1 - 28
Seattle Opera, PO Box 8248, Seattle, Washington 98108, US.
Tel +1-206-599 7676 Fax +1-206-599 7689
Website: <http://www.seattleopera.org>

The Seattle Opera's tradition of performing Wagner every summer makes it a convenient North American alternative to Bayreuth - and the 1998 production of *Tristan und Isolde* promises to be as good as anything currently on offer at Bayreuth. Ben Heppner and Jane Eaglen sing the title roles in Francesco Zambello's staging, conducted by Armin Jordan. There are 10 performances.

SHAW

May 11 - November 7
Shaw Festival Box Office, Box 774, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario L0S 1J0, Canada.
Tel +1-905-468 2172 Fax +1-905-468 3504
Agent in London and New York: Edwards & Edwards
Tel +44-171-734 4655/ +1-800-223 6106

What distinguishes this theatre festival is not just its proximity to the Niagara Falls; its real claim for attention is its focus on the work of George Bernard Shaw and playwrights who were alive when he was. That gives the repertoire an inevitable sense of period: this is the best place in North America to see revivals of Victorian and Edwardian theatre, and American comedy of the 1930s and 1940s. The festival is run by Christopher Newton, an emigre Brit whose own productions are dependably stylish. The season gets into full gear by early June, when there are six plays in repertory. With three different theatres and frequent matinees, you can see a lot in a short time. The 1998 programme includes Shaw's rarely-performed *John Bull's Other Island*, plus *Major Barbara*, Galsworthy's *The Joy of Sex*, *The Lady's Not for Burning* and a classic American comedy by Kaufman and Hart, *You Can't Take It With You*.

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SPOLITO

June 26 - July 12
Associazione Festival del Due Mondi, Via Duomo 7, 06049 Spoleto, Italy.
Tel +39-0743-222811
Fax +39-0743-221684

This Umbrian hill-town, within easy reach of Rome, hosts one of Italy's best-known festivals, but the unpredictable behaviour of its octogenarian founder-director, Gian Carlo Menotti, gives it a hit-and-miss quality. Richard Hickox presides over the opening concerts in the Piazza Duomo, with a programme of Holst's *The Planets* and Beethoven's *Symphony*. He also conducts productions of Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vain* and Menotti's *The Consul* in the Teatro Nuovo. Béjart brings his ballet troupe, and there's an Italian-language production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

STAVANGER

August 7 - 16
International Chamber Music Festival, Sandvika 27, 4007 Stavanger, Norway.
Tel +47-5184 6570 Fax +47-5184 6573

The combination of small-town charm, historical buildings and easy access to spectacular scenery makes Stavanger an ideal chamber music venue. The artistic director is Norwegian cellist Tulla Mørch, who's guests include Kathryn Stott, Thomas Zehetmair, Christian Lindberg and the Præstak Quartet.

STOCKHOLM

June 5 - 13
Royal Swedish Ballet, PO Box 16094, 10322 Stockholm, Sweden.
Tel +46-8-248540 Fax +46-8-791 4365

To celebrate its 225th anniversary, the Royal Swedish Ballet is giving a special series of performances at the Royal Opera House. The festival opens with four works from the Ballet Suedois repertoire, originally choreographed by Jean Bérin for the Swedish Ballet in Paris during the 1920s and now reconstructed by Mikko Hodeen, Kenneth Archer and Ivo Crank. Other highlights include MacMillan's *Mayerling*.

STRATFORD, UK

May 11 - November 7
Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 6BS, England.
Tel +44-1789-295623 Fax +44-1789-291974
Website: <http://www.royal-shakespeare.org.uk>
The Royal Shakespeare Company's repertory in the

main theatre features *Measure for Measure*, *The Tempest* and *The Merchant of Venice*; in the Swan, Ben Jonson's *Bertholme Fair* and a new play by Stephen Poshoff; and in The Other Place, Roberto Zucco's controversial Bernard-Marie Koltès piece, a trilogy of Irish plays and new plays by Robert Holman and Richard Nelson. You can usually get seats for the Royal Shakespeare Theatre without booking; the other two get booked up quickly, especially at weekends. There are two matinees a week, and no performances on Sundays.

STRATFORD, CANADA

May 11 - November 7
Stratford Festival, PO Box 520, Stratford, Ontario N5A 6Y2, Canada.
Tel +1-800-567 1000 Website: <http://www.stratfordfestival.ca>

The biggest and best theatre festival in North America, reachable in two hours by train from Toronto or by car from Detroit. There are five plays running by the end of May and a packed schedule from July to October (nothing on Mondays or Sunday evenings, but wild activity for the rest of the week). This year's repertory: *Julius Caesar*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *Mollare's The Miser*, *Bolt's A Man for all Seasons* and Tennessee Williams' *The Night of the Iguana*.

TANGLEWOOD

July 3 - September 6
United mid-June: Tanglewood Ticket Office, Symphony Hall, Boston MA 02115, US.
Tel +1-617-268 1482. From mid-June: Tanglewood Ticket Office, Tanglewood, Lenox MA 01904, US.
Tel +1-617-931 2000. Website: <http://www.tso.org>

The Boston Symphony Orchestra's summer home provides a relaxed setting for music in the heart of the Massachusetts countryside. This year's Shed concerts feature Rostropovich, Tzafra, Argich, Vengorov and many other high-powered names. There will be a special Bernstein tribute and a weekend of jazz. The Joffrey, Emerson and Guarnieri Quartets give a series of recitals in Ozawa Hall, each of which frames a 20th century work with a pair of Beethoven quartets. Heart Outlines and Maurice Kagel are composers in residence.

INTERMISSION

Tanglewood's main events take place at weekends, but there are several theatre and dance festivals to explore in the surrounding area (see under Williamstown), and the Berkshire countryside is ideal for relaxation. Stay at one of the inexpensive inns in Lenox, Stockbridge or Great Barrington - the Berkshire Visitors Bureau has a list of places (Website: <http://www.berkshires.org>). Eat at the Church Street Cafe or Cafe Lucie in Lenox, the Orient Express (Vietnamese) or Red Lion Inn (classic New England experience) at West Stockbridge, or the Helsinki Cafe and Bann Restaurant (Japanese) in Great Barrington. It's advisable to book a table. Fencing on the lawn before the concert is an institution; you can buy food at the Tanglewood canteen. If you're flying in through Boston, Tanglewood is two hours' drive on the main turnpike going west. If you're coming from New York and combining your Tanglewood visit with Glimmerglass, take the train along the spectacular Hudson River to Albany and hire a car there.

TANGELWOOD

July 3 - September 6
United mid-June: Tanglewood Ticket Office, Symphony Hall, Boston MA 02115, US.
Tel +1-617-268 1482. From mid-June: Tanglewood Ticket Office, Tanglewood, Lenox MA 01904, US.
Tel +1-617-931 2000. Website: <http://www.tso.org>

TORRE DEL LAGO

July 24 - August 3
Foncolt Service, Viale Puccini 257/a, 55048 Torre del Lago Puccini, Italy.
Tel +39-584-950022 Fax +39-584-350277

The open-air Puccini festival, close to the villa and lake where he composed most of his operas, is easily combined with a Tuscan holiday. *Turandot* heads the bill this summer, and *Gli uccelli* is performed in tandem with Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*.

UTRECHT

August 28 - September 7
Utrecht Early Music Festival, Postbox 734, 3500 AS Utrecht, Netherlands.
Tel +31-30-226 2226 Fax +31-30-226 2786

Spread around the town's medieval churches, baroque salons and modern concert venues, the Utrecht Early Music Festival boasts 60 concerts in 10 days. This year's themes are Dresden in 1720 (Dresden and Freiburg Baroque Orchestra), Philip II's Spain (Hesperion XX, The Sboen), War and Peace (Cantus K&N) and Hildegard von Bingen.

VERBIE

July 17 - August 2
Verbier Festival and Academy, Office du Tourisme, CH-1936 Verbier, Switzerland.
Tel +41-27-771 2282 Fax +41-27-771 7057
Website: <http://www.verbierfestival.com>

This Alpine festival, run by dynamic Swedish impresario Martin Engström, allows talented young musicians to mix with world-renowned soloists - who give masterclasses, recitals and orchestral concerts. The main events take place in a tent fitted with an acoustical shell. This year's highlights include a Gershwin tribute with Barbara Hendricks and the Monty Alexander Trio, an Evelyn Glennie percussion extravaganza and a series of high-powered chamber music events, in which Evgeny Kissin, Joshua Bell, Dmitri Sitkovskiy, Yuri Bashmet, Stephen Kovacevich and others let off steam.

VERONA

June 26 - August 30
Biglietta, Via Dietro Anfiteatro 61b, 37121 Verona, Italy.
Tel +39-45-800 8151 Fax +39-45-801 3267
Website: <http://www.arena.it>

Those who enjoy arena-style opera, with its noisy atmosphere and semaphoric acting, will not want to miss *Aida* and *Nabucco*. Two other Verdi operas - *Un ballo in maschera* and *Rigoletto* - fill out the programme, alongside *Tosca* with Ruggero Raimondi as Scarpia.

WEXFORD

October 15 - November 1
Theatre Royal, High Street, Wexford, Republic of Ireland.
Tel +353-53-22144 Fax +353-53-24289
Website: <http://www.jol.ie/wexopera>

Wexford's festival of rare opera is the ideal destination for an autumn break. Although it is expanding and enjoying an increasingly international clientele, the basic format has remained the same, with three-night cycles making it easy for visitors to catch all three productions. This year's choices - *Gemini's Foscari*, *Zandara's I cavalieri di Egitto* and *Händel's The Chieftain* - looks like another winning trio.

● INTERMISSION
Seaford is Wexford's main culinary attraction. The Lobster Pot, an old country pub at Cane Hill +353-53-31110, is renowned for lobster and crab; the Silver

Fox, in the attractive harbour at Kilmore Quay (+353-53-29888), for mussels and other seafood. In Wexford itself, try Centenary Store for lunch. La Riva for supper. Tim's Tavern can be recommended for bar meals - quick and simple before or after the performance - and its small restaurant at the back has some of the best oysters in town. Robertino's in the High Street stays open late: if you haven't booked a serious meal elsewhere, its pasta is worth investigating, and you may end up meeting all the cast. Nobody minds if you don't wear evening dress to the theatre, but regulars regard dressing-up as part of the fun. Don't be put off by the festival's old guard who go on about the good old days: Wexford may be less convivial than it used to be, but it's a lot more professional.

WILLIAMSTOWN

June 17 - August 30
Williamstown Theatre Festival, PO Box 517, Williamstown, MA 01987, US.
Tel +1-413-597 3400

This is the most renowned theatre festival in New England, about 40 minutes from Tanglewood on the northern edge of the Berkshires. The main stage has Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*, Thornton Wilder's *The Matchmaker*, Richard Nelson's *The Rainmaker*, Richard Binsley Swenson's *The Rivals* and a Timberlake Wertenbaker adaptation of Euripides's *Hecuba*, with movie-star Olympia Dukakis in the title role. The smaller theatre, recently renamed the Nikea Stage, has Clifford Odets's *The Big Knife* and new plays by A. R. Gurney and Paul Rudnick. Visit this summer's Degas exhibition at the Francine and Stirling Clark Art Institute; the Jacob's Pillow dance festival at Becket is another attraction (PO Box 287, Lee, MA 01238, tel +1-413-243 0745).

YORK

July 3 - 12
York Early Music Festival, PO Box 228, York YO90 5ZU, England.
Tel +44-1907-594123 Fax +44-1904-612891

The UK's premier early music festival is designed to complement the medieval churches, guild halls and historic houses for which York is famous. This year's guests include Emma Kirkby, the Academy of Ancient Music and the Gabrieli Consort.

ZÜRICH

June 25 - July 19
Ticket Office, Zürcher Festspiele, Postfach 6036, CH-8023 Zurich.
Tel +41-1-289 9090 Fax +41-1-289 7025

Zürich resurfaced on the festival scene last year. It seems to be modelling itself on the Vienna festival - a broad spread of international events, but lacking coherence - in an attempt to live up to a period when the season traditionally ran dry. The 1998 programme is spiced by an exotic range of theatre from Australia, Cuba, India, Israel, Japan, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. There are some high-calibre opera performances, including Gardiner conducting *Oberon* and a Pountney production of *La fanciulla del West*, plus concerts conducted by Chelly, Hemoncourt, Jansons and Sawallisch.

TRAVEL COMPANIES

JMB Travel Consultants, Rushwick, Worcester WR2 5BN, England.
Tel +44-0905-425628 Fax +44-1905-420219

Liaisons Abroad, Chertil House, 181/183 Kings Road, London SW9 5BB, England.
Tel +44-171-578 4020 Fax +44-171-376 4442
Website: <http://www.liaisonsabroad.com>

Martin Randall Travel, 10 Barley Mow Passage, Chiswick, London W4 4PH, England.
Tel +44-181-742 3355 Fax +44-181-742 7768

Page & Moy, 136-140 London Road, Leicester LE2 1EN, England.
Tel +44-116-250 7747

Travel for the Arts, 117 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 8UR, England.
Tel +44-171-483 4466 Fax +44-171-586 0638
Website: <http://www.travelforthearts.co.uk>

Edwards & Edwards Global Tickets, British Travel Centre, 12 Regent Street, London SW1Y 4PE, England.
Tel +44-171-734 4555 Fax +44-171-734 0220
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VICTOR HOCHHAUSER presents

The Royal Ballet

LA BAYADERE
July 7, 9, 17, 18 (m&e)

SWAN LAKE
July 10, 11 (m&e), 13, 14 (m&e), 15, 16

MANON
July 20, 21 (m&e), 22, 23, 31, Aug 1 (m&e)

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY
July 27, 28 (m&e), 29, 30

CONCERTO
DON QUIXOTE pas de deux
'A ROYAL BALLET'
THE TALISMAN pas de deux
RAYMONDA ACT III
July 24, 25 (m&e)

* Royal Ballet School Matinee

Monday to Friday 7.30
Saturday 7.00
Matinees 2.00

Principals include
Darcey Bussell
Jonathan Cope
Viviana Durante
Sylvie Guillem
Tetsuya Kumakawa
Irek Mukhamedov
Igor Zelensky

7 July to 1 August

0171 632 8300

London Coliseum

Darcy Bussell Photo: Jimmy Worrall

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